■ Lifestyle / C1

Botero takes Botox-crazy Asia by storm

■ Across / A17

US troops start relief operations in Quezon, Aurora

■ World / A9

Ukraine leader likely poisoned, doctors say

■ Sports / A26

Pacquiao was 'terribly out of shape,' says trainer

Tanong ng Bayan / A20

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Estrada gets court pass to visit FPJ in hospital

By Armand Nocum, Marinel R. Cruz and Edson Tandoc Jr.

SAYING he was depressed by what happened to his friend of 40 years, former President Joseph Estrada last night visited Fernando Poe Jr. as the movie actor lay in a coma at St. Luke's Medical Center after suffering a stroke.

ESTRADA/ A20

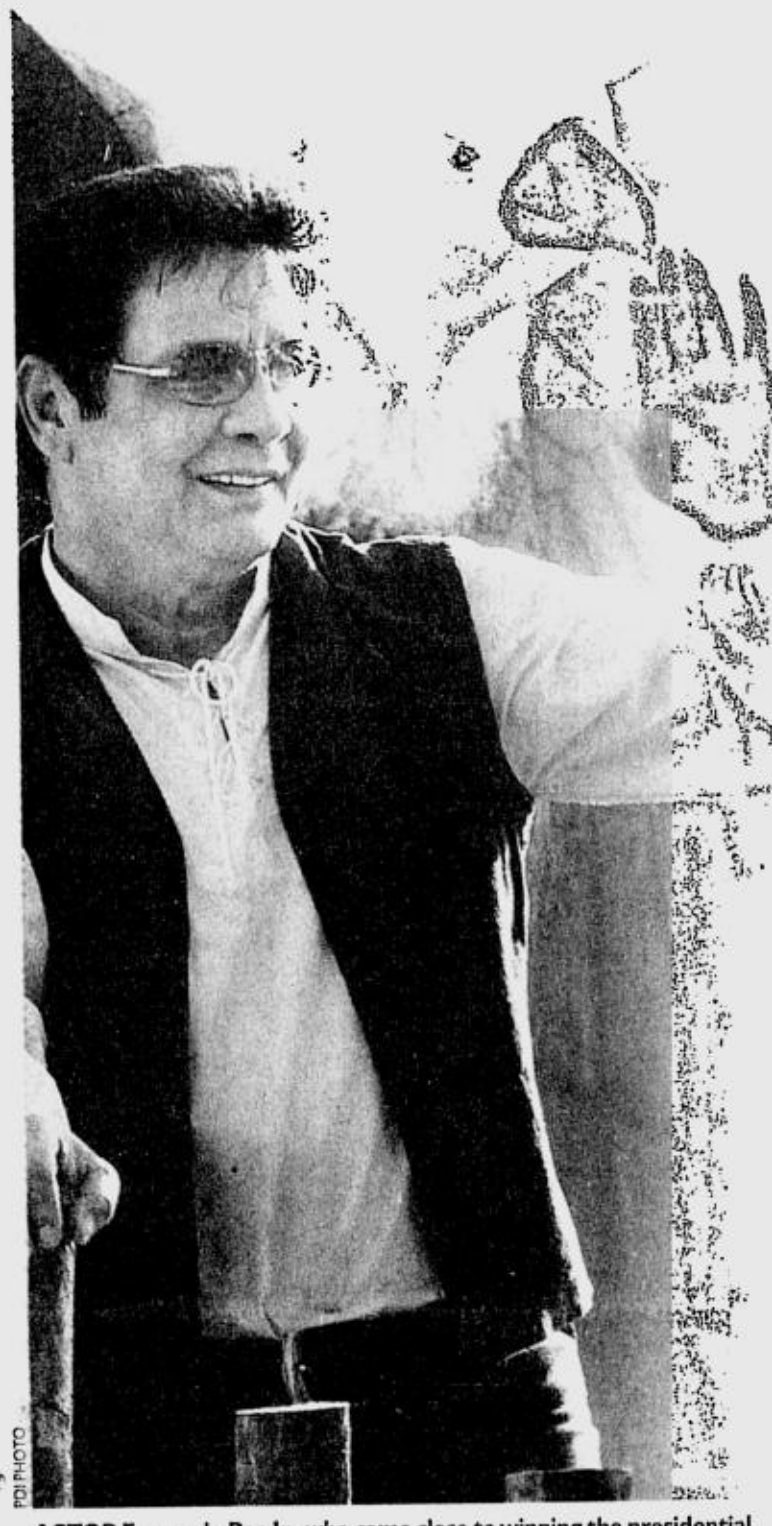
Angeles sizzles anew with giant 'sisig' dish

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—Forget cholesterol. Angeles is determined to change its image from "sin city" to "*sisig* capital."

ANGELES / A21

FPJ in coma; next 72 hours crucial



PDI PHOTO

ACTOR Fernando Poe Jr., who came close to winning the presidential election in May, needs a crucial victory this time. In the movies, he often portrayed heroes who overcame the toughest odds.

Prayers urged for actor after stroke

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Carlito Pablo, Nini Valera and TJ Burgonio

FERNANDO POE Jr. lay fighting for his life in a hospital intensive care unit yesterday, nearly 24 hours after suffering a stroke and falling into a coma.

As news spread across the nation that the 65-year-old king of Philippine movies was desperately ill, relatives, friends, people from across the political divide and churchmen and women offered prayers for the recovery of the man who came within 3 percent of unseating President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May election.

Through the day, rumors by way of text messages flew that Poe had died but this was denied by friends who kept vigil at the neuro-intensive care unit of St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City.

"The critical period is the next 72 hours," said Rep. Francis Escudero, who was Poe's spokesperson during the election.

Emerging from the room where his father lay unconscious, FPJ's 21-year-old son, Ronian Poe, was weeping.

A relative rushed to comfort him. But the son just leaned on a cold wall, his head bowed, tears falling.

Politicians, actors, relatives and fans who had trooped to the hospital shared his agony.

"*Lalaban 'yan* (He will fight on)," a relative told Ronian, referring to the actor.

But the son was speechless.

Poe's wife, actress Susan Roces, stayed beside her husband inside the ICU, greeting visitors, mostly limited to family members, who peeked into the room.

FPJ IN COMA/ A7

CRITICAL PERIOD. Former President Corazon Aquino (left) urges prayers for Poe's immediate recovery. At right, Rep. Francis Escudero, Poe's presidential campaign spokesperson, and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay brief journalists at a press conference.

PHOTOS BY REM ZAMORA

Cory lends miraculous rosary to Poe

By Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

A MIRACULOUS rosary lent by former President Corazon Aquino keeps ailing movie actor and former presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. company by his hospital bed.

Aquino was among the throng of visitors who dropped by yesterday at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City to offer prayers for Poe, who suffered a stroke the other night and is now in a coma.

Poe's friend, former Sen. Vicente Sotto III, said Aquino was able to visit Poe at the intensive care unit.

"She brought a rosary she had earlier lent to Vandolph when he was in critical condition," Sotto said, referring to the actor-son of comedy king Dolphy.

Vandolph was critically injured in November 2001 when his pickup hit a truck in Pangasinan. His girlfriend, Desiree Raquiza, died in the accident.

Vandolph has since recovered from his injuries.

Sotto said Aquino lent the same miraculous rosary to Poe. He added that Poe's wife, actress Susan Roces, was "worried but she's praying."

Sotto rushed to the hospital early yesterday morning when Poe's personal aide informed him about the actor's condition. He learned that Poe had suffered a second stroke at 7:30 a.m.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who beat Poe in the bitterly

CORY/ A19

RP joins UN Assembly rebuff to oust-Annan bid

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

IN A DRAMATIC turnaround, the Bush administration called off Thursday its campaign to force the resignation of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan after it ran into a wall of support of 190 UN members—including the Philippines—which rallied behind the embattled Annan amid allegations of corruption in the UN oil-for-food program in Iraq.

The switch followed outpourings of support for Annan from European Union countries—including Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Spain—as well as Arab countries and 54 African countries.

The rebuff to the United States was dramatized by the standing ovation that Annan received at the General Assembly after rendering a report on a package of fundamental reforms at the United Nations.

The rare ovation reflected the extent of the US isolation in the United Nations after it side-tracked the Security Council in its unilateral decision to invade Iraq.

Following the resounding expression of confidence in Annan from the UN members, US Ambassador John Danforth, who said he was speaking on behalf of the Bush administration, flagged Washington's back-off.

"We are not suggesting or pushing for the resignation of the secretary general," Danforth said.

RP JOINS/ A21

JOHN BUNDOC

"ST. NICK" comes to kindergarten at the Waldorf School in Quezon City with his "Golden Book" listing who was nice or naughty.

'Low-profile' Santa teaches pupils true holiday spirit

By Volt Contreras

IF YOU agree that Christmas has become too commercialized, you'd commend this school for ensuring that its students see beyond the gift-giving frenzy associated with Santa Claus.

In the yearly Yuletide celebration of the Waldorf School in Quezon City, there is no activity involving the jolly old man in the red suit. Instead, it invites to the campus another elder who also sports a white, fluffy beard but is dressed like a bishop.

The 16 kids making up the kindergarten class are used to having their seats arranged in a semicircle during class, but they had no idea what their teacher, whom they call "Tita," was up to when they made the formation that Dec. 6 morning, during Advent Week.

At around 9:30 a.m., the door suddenly opened and in came "St. Nick," with a staff and his "Golden Book." Crawling at his heels was a dirty but docile "creature" covered in brown sackcloth from head to toe, rattling a pouch of stones.

St. Nick seated himself in the middle of his stunned audience of

LOW-PROFILE/ A8

Bomb explodes at GenSan market; 13 killed, 53 hurt

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A bomb exploded at the public market in Barangay South Dadiangas here yesterday afternoon, killing at least 13 people, including a 5-year-old boy, and wounding 53 others.

Witnesses said three people died on the spot. Four victims died at St. Elizabeth Hospital and six others at General Santos Hospital.

At least 23 of the wounded were brought to St. Elizabeth Hospital, 19 to General Santos Hospital and six to District Hospital.

Witnesses said the bomb exploded at Stall No. 82 of the meat section at around 4:15 p.m. The market's ceiling was damaged and the stall was destroyed.

Shoppers and merchants fled in panic after the explosion and police cordoned off the area.

"The earth shook," said one dazed woman. "It was a loud explosion."

In Manila, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye denounced the bombing.

"We condemn in the strongest terms this attack against innocent civilians. There is no justification whatsoever for this heinous act. The police and military are now conducting a thorough probe of this incident," Bunye said.

Chief Supt. Antonio Billiones, the region's police chief, told reporters that his men were still investigating to determine the type and make of the explosive used in the attack.

Police noted recent reports of threats from the Abu Sayyaf, a group linked to the regional militant network Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). But the city mayor said the blast could have been caused by feuding merchants.

Billiones said police had been getting intelligence reports as early

BOMB/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2004

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon and Eastern Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowerss.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY. RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/13/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Catanan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Palace eases up on tax measures

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WITH time fast running out, Malacañang has conceded it might not be able to have the necessary tax measures it wants passed by Congress approved before the end of the year.

Instead, Malacañang now wants Congress to focus on tax measures that it could easily pass within the next few weeks "given the remaining time," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier expressed confidence that Congress would approve at least four of the eight revenue measures she had proposed in her tax package, including the so-called sin taxes on tobacco and alcohol products.

But with less than a week before Congress goes on recess for the Christmas holidays, no single tax bill has been passed.

"Based on our observation, our lawmakers are determining what measures are easier and faster to pass at present and this is what they will approve. We will continue to push for all the tax measures we have declared but we will only tackle first those that are easier to pass," Bunye said in an interview over RMN radio. "Once Congress resumes, then we will tackle the other measures."

So far, the House of Representatives has approved the increase in excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol products, the lateral attrition bill which provides incentives and imposes penalties on employees of revenue generating agencies, and the tax amnesty bill.

These bills have been submitted to the Senate for floor deliberations before being tackled by the bicameral conference committee.

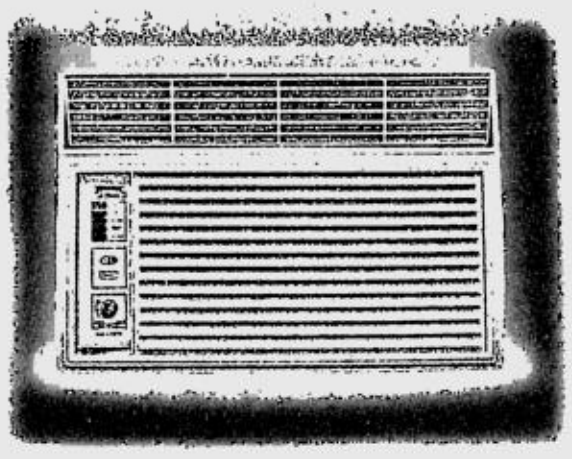
Aside from the sin tax, Malacañang had hoped Congress would pass the franchise tax on telecommunication firms, remove the value-added tax exemptions, and approve the tax amnesty bill before the end of this year. Bunye said Malacañang remained confident the sin tax bill would be approved in due time, although he would not say whether it would be before the end of the year.

The taxes were seen as the most contentious but most potent in terms of revenue potential in the President's tax package and Malacañang wanted them enacted this year to avert a full-blown fiscal crisis and the possible downgrade of the country's credit rating.

Credit rating agencies such as Moody's Investors Services are poised to downgrade the Philippines credit rating due to doubts on the President's ability to pass new tax measures needed to reduce the swelling budget deficit and public debt.

Bunye said Malacañang had left it entirely to Congress to decide which tax measures it should prioritize for approval. "But we want to assure everybody the overall objective of the executive branch to raise revenues from new tax measures will remain," Bunye said.

Alas, old friend, you have served me well, and parting is such sweet sorrow...



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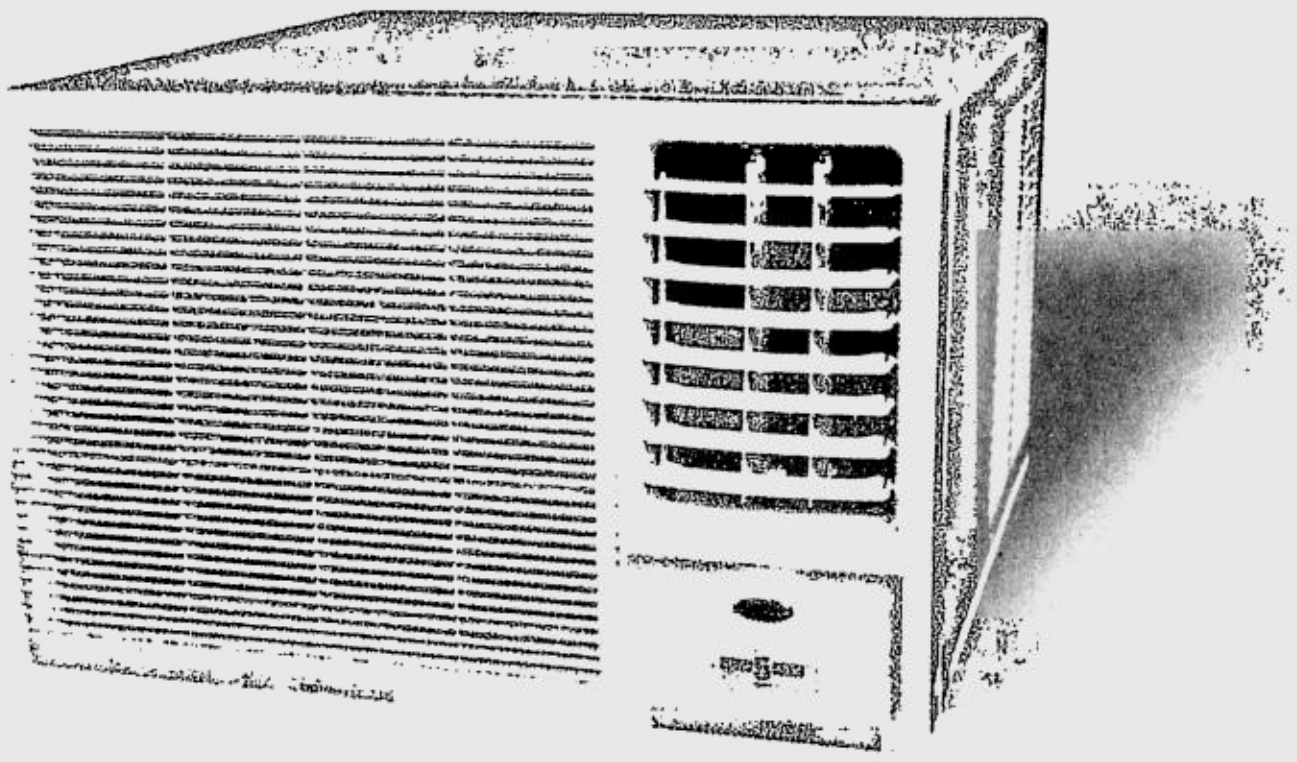

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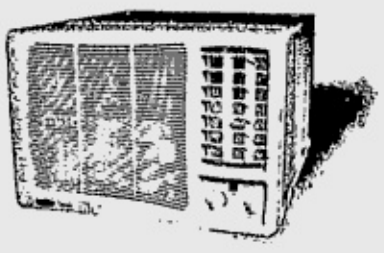

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Timely tunnel repair would avert crisis

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora

MALACAÑANG yesterday allayed fears of a looming water shortage in Metro Manila after the recent typhoons damaged a vital water supply tunnel linking the Umiray River in Quezon province to the Angat Dam in Bulacan, but nevertheless encouraged residents to use water wisely.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo had been assured by officials of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) that the rehabilitation of the 13-km Umiray-Angat tunnel "would be completed in time to avert a water crisis in Metro Manila."

The 13-km tunnel bringing water to Angat Dam, which supplies 90 percent of Metro Manila's water needs for its 12 million residents, could take four months to clear, the government said in a statement. The tunnel supplies 30 percent of Angat's water needs.

Authorities had warned that unless the damage to the tunnel was repaired within that time frame, Manila ran the risk of a water shortage this summer. The government will meet Monday to assess the damage.

Bunye said that Malacañang would make sure that the MWSS completed the rehabilitation work before the summer when water demand is at its peak.

Despite assurances from MWSS officials, Malacañang called on the public to use water efficiently. "We should conserve our water supply and avoid wastage to avert a water shortage," Bunye said.

Bunye noted that the Umiray-Angat tunnel suffered heavy damage and that access to the busted portion was difficult. "If it is not rehabilitated soon, it could affect water supply during the summer months," he said.

Irrigation to Bulacan and parts of Pampanga provinces could also be seriously affected.

Militants blamed the damage sustained by the tunnel on logging companies.

"These companies should carry the cost of rehabilitating the Umiray tunnel instead of the taxpaying public," Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusan ng Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas national chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

With an AFP report

Storms ruined ₱2.7-B in crops

By Christine O. Avendano

THE FOUR typhoons that recently struck the country destroyed P2.7 billion worth of "palay," corn, coconut and high-value commercial crops (HVCCs) in Luzon, Sen. Mar Roxas said yesterday.

HVCCs refer to valuable vegetables, fruits and other farm produce with lucrative export markets.

In a statement, Roxas said he got the figures from an initial report submitted by the Department of Agriculture to his Senate committees. Roxas chairs the trade and economic committees.

According to the initial DA report, the biggest production losses came from the HVCCs, which totaled P833.31 million.

Also destroyed were P790.87 million worth of corn, P624.26 million worth of palay and P383.84 million worth of coconuts.

In terms of volume production, the hardest hit was the corn crop where 349,000 metric tons were wiped out. A total of 205,931 metric tons of palay were also destroyed.

An aggregate of 138,593 hectares of corn lands were affected by the four typhoons. Also affected were 138,838 hectares of rice farms and 31,937 hectares of HVCC plantations.

A total of 153 million coconut trees were downed or damaged by the typhoons.

Roxas is set to hold a hearing today to investigate the impact of the extensive crop losses on the supply and prices of basic commodities.

"We have to determine... if we would still have ample supplies of corn and rice in the weeks ahead," he said.

Roxas said a stable and sufficient supply of corn, for instance, was necessary to ensure stable pork and chicken prices.

Masinloc power plant sale backed

By Abigail L. Ho

THE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm) yesterday defended the sale of the 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales to a Filipino-Australian consortium amid threats from the Senate minority to block the sale, warning that a unilateral cancellation of the sale would be disadvantageous to the government and to the public.

Raphael Perpetuo Lotilla, Psalm president and chief executive officer, said the sale of the Masinloc plant was in the best interest of the government since it would give Psalm access to the $9 million which the winning bidder, YNN Pacific Consortium Inc., posted as bid security.

"To unilaterally cancel the Masinloc sale would be to commit an act grossly disadvantageous to the public interest as it would deprive government of the right to draw upon the bid security.," Lotilla said.

He explained that upon the issuance of the notice of award to YNN, the bid bond would go up to more than $11.2 million, representing around two percent of the $561-million bid submitted by the consortium.

In the event YNN Pacific declines to accept the notice of award issued by Psalm, its $9-million bid security would be forfeited and Psalm would have the right to call a rebid.

If the consortium accepts the notice of award but fails to pay the $224-million upfront fee for the plant or reneges on the sale, Psalm has the right to access the increased performance bond of $11.2 million and hold another auction.

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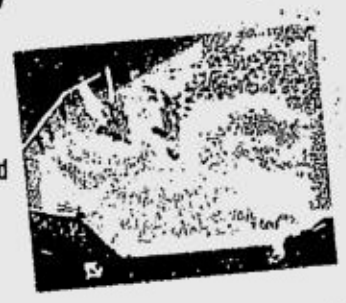

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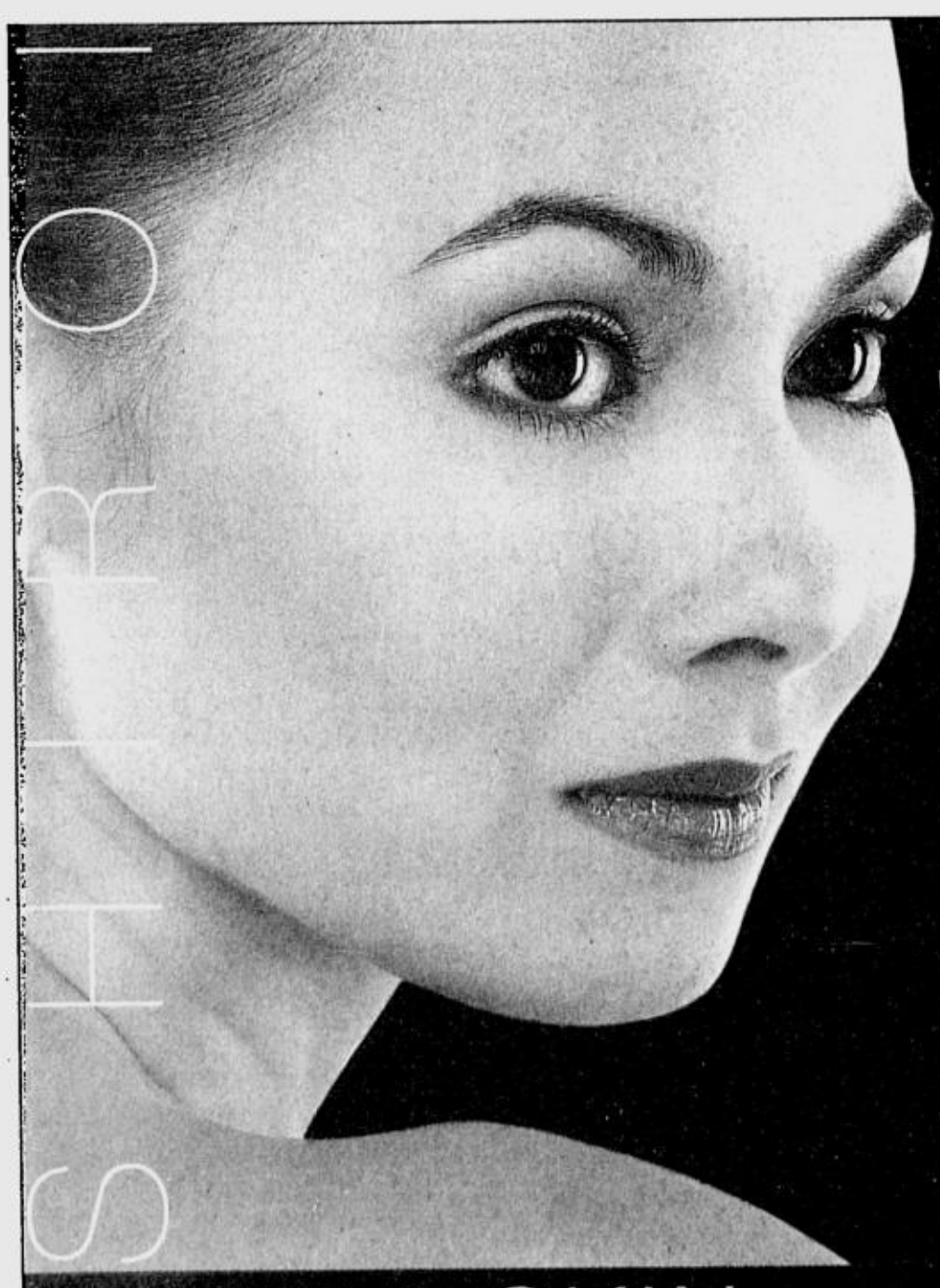

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Aglipay dares cops to prove TI wrong

(This story should have run under the banner headline of the Second Front Page on Saturday but due to a glitch, another story ran under the headline. We regret the error—Ed.)

By Christian V. Esguerra

PHILIPPINE National Police Director General Edgar Aglipay has stepped up the pressure on 115,000 police officers to improve the image of the PNP in the wake of a report by an international anticorruption watchdog which listed the PNP as the country's most corrupt institution.

"We will change from now on," Aglipay told a press conference. "We will do everything that the public wants us to do."

Germany-based Transparency International had given the PNP a rating of 4.2 in the five-point TI corruption index. Political parties and the legislature were ranked a close second as the most corrupt institutions with 4.1. The least corrupt were the Church and other religious sects with a 2.1 rating.

Aglipay said it was "useless" to contest the findings of TI. Instead, he asked his men to "prove it wrong."

"It's better to do everything so that we can dispel the claim," he said. "Let us look for ways to make ourselves the kind of police officers that the public wants us to be."

The TI corruption report was a big blow to Aglipay's campaign to jumpstart a long-term and lasting reform of the PNP during his brief six-month tenure that will end on March 13 next year.

Since he assumed office on Aug. 23, Aglipay had ordered PNP field commanders to solve within a month at least five of every 100 cases within their jurisdiction.

A similar deadline was imposed on the arrest of wanted persons and criminal syndicates.

Judgment day will be on Dec. 20. Those who fail to meet the standard will be given "kalabasa" (squash) awards, he said.

All PNP officers are also required to wear an "item card" while on duty. The item card specifies an officer's duty schedule and his area or office of assignment.

"It means that when something happens in an area, it's the person assigned there who will be held accountable," Aglipay said. "This innovation will address the problem on the non-availability of police."

Aglipay, however, said there were still a number of international and government agencies that continued to trust the PNP despite the perception that it was corrupt.

He cited the United Nations Children's Fund which has tapped the PNP as a partner for a book tackling cases of children under threat. "It means that institutions (like the UN) keep their trust in the PNP," he said.

To effectively check corruption in the PNP, Aglipay has proposed making the PNP Internal Affairs Service "completely independent" from the PNP.

In separate hearings early this week, Aglipay asked congressmen to pass a law that would make the IAS "completely independent."

Aglipay said this would enable the IAS to conduct more effective investigations of irregularities within the police organization, including "lifestyle checks" of top PNP officials.

The IAS has so far failed in its mandate, particularly in cases involving the PNP's top brass, considering that its findings are only "recommendatory" in nature. The final say is still with the PNP chief who decides whether to uphold or junk the IAS recommendation.

Most of the IAS staff are active PNP officers although its head, the inspector general, is a civilian.

To remedy the situation, Aglipay said he had ordered the appointment of civilian deputies to the PNP's office for comptrollership and for finance. "There will be more civilians assigned to critical (positions)," he said.

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3. Accounts that are closed/terminated, under litigation or garnished during the promo period will be disqualified.
4. During the promo period, qualified depositors/accounts will earn electronic-generated raffle entries based on the required ADBs. It will be posted in the branch where they maintain their accounts for viewing after the last day of the promo period.
5. The following can qualify to join the promo:

5.1. New Depositors who will open and maintain any of the following types of accounts within the promo period:

	Required Min. Initial Deposit
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Employees' ATM Payroll	P 1,000.00
Premium Savings	P25,000.00
Peso Time Deposit	P10,000.00

Every P1,000.00 ADB earns one (1) raffle point, the higher the ADB the more raffle points will be earned by the new depositors.

5.2. Existing depositors of qualified products who will increase and maintain their ADBs within the promo period - Every P1,000.00 increase in ADB from October 22, 2004 to January 21, 2005 (Reference ADB) will earn 1 raffle point. The higher the ADB, the more raffle points will be earned by the existing depositors.

6. Exportbank's Deposito Mo, 1 Milyon ang Panalo Raffle Promo will be held on February 4, 2005 at the Exportbank Head Office, Exportbank Plaza, Makati City to be witnessed by a Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Representative.
7. A deposit account can win only once. In the event that the raffle number pertaining to the same account is drawn more than once, the said account will be awarded with the prize that has greater value.
8. In case of disputes, the decision of Exportbank with the concurrence of the DTI shall be deemed final.
9. The Bank will shoulder the 20% Tax for prizes worth more than P10,000.00.
10. Winners will be notified via registered mail and their names will also be published in a newspaper of general circulation.
11. Exportbank reserves the right to feature the winning depositors in its PR write-ups and/or advertisements but without additional compensation to them.
12. Accounts should be active until February 4, 2005.
13. When claiming their prizes, the winning depositors must present their valid IDs (e.g. passport, driver's license, company ID, school ID) together with the mailed notice to the branch where they opened their account.
14. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from the notification date will be forfeited in favor of the Bank with prior DTI approval.

CASH /RAFFLE PRIZES TO BE WON BY THE DEPOSITORS

Category of Winners	Amount of Cash Prize
1st Prize	P1-Million
2nd Prize	P100,000.00
3rd Prize	P50,000.00
10 Consolation Prizes	P 2,000.00 each or P20,000.00 Total
TOTAL	P1,170-Million

Promo Period: October 22, 2004 to January 21, 2005

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 2536 Series of 2004

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Underling gave Nayan kidnap gang head away

A DISSIDENT member of the militant Islamic group that kidnapped three United Nations workers, including a junior Filipino diplomat, in Afghanistan provided the tip that led to the arrest of the organization's leader, a Pakistani security official said Sunday.

Syed Akbar Agha, a former Taliban frontline commander in Afghanistan who founded Jaish-al Muslimeen, or Army of Muslims, was captured in Karachi last week. The Pakistani government initially kept his seizure a secret in hopes that his interrogation could provide leads on other suspects.

On Sunday, the police chief in southern Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital, said Agha was arrested by intelligence agents on Dec. 3 during a raid on an apartment in the Gulsha-e-Iqbal neighborhood.

"At the time, his family was also detained, but they were freed on Dec. 9," said Kamal Shah. He said Agha's family had occupied the apartment for about eight months.

Shah said Agha's real name was Abdul Karim Haqqani, according to a Pakistani national identity card he was carrying. However, local residents knew him as Mohammed Mustafa, he said.

A security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a dissident member of Agha's group provided the location of the apartment where the leader was living with his family.

Armed men had seized Filipino diplomat Angelito Nayan, Annetta Flanigan from Northern Ireland and Shqipe Hebibi of Kosovo on Oct. 28.

The three were part of a UN team that prepared for and supervised the landmark Oct. 9 presidential elections in Afghanistan.

Philippine foreign officials yesterday hailed the capture of Agha.

"We are encouraged by the relentless pursuit versus terrorism; it has once again succeeded. Efforts are paying off," said Undersecretary Jose Brillantes, who led the team that worked with UN and Afghan officials to win Nayan's freedom.

"It shows that the fight versus terrorism has to go on and we are encouraged by this success," Brillantes added in an interview.

When he arrived in Manila on Nov. 25, Nayan, 34, was reluctant to give a description of his captors or specify where he, Flanigan and Hebibi had been dropped off in Kabul, apparently in deference to the pursuit operations against their kidnappers.

Nayan described their captors as "ruthless," but said that they were treated well, even managing to wrangle a few concessions.

"Generally speaking, I wouldn't say they were pretty kind, but they weren't cruel either. They gave in to some of our demands... All in all, it could have been worse...," he said.

Nayan has requested an extension of his six-month leave from the Department of Foreign Affairs which ended on Nov. 28. He is set to report for work in the middle of this month.

TJ Burgonio; AP

Search for missing crew halted

ANCHORAGE—The search for six crew members, among them a Filipino, missing from a wrecked cargo ship in Alaska has been suspended, and authorities are focusing on the cleanup of spilled bunker fuel oil from the vessel, an official said on Saturday.

With water temperatures around 6 degrees Celsius and the missing crewmen lacking survival gear, chances for their survival are slim, said Marti Early, an Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation official working at the joint command post set up by the US Coast Guard. *(See related story in The World, Page A10).*

"The active search has been suspended, but they of course will continue to look as they go out and do other oil-related activity," Early said.

The ship, the Malaysian-flagged Selendang Ayu, split into two pieces late Wednesday after running aground off the coast of Unalaska, one of the Aleutian islands. The six crew members were lost when a Coast Guard helicopter crashed during a rescue operation conducted under stormy conditions.

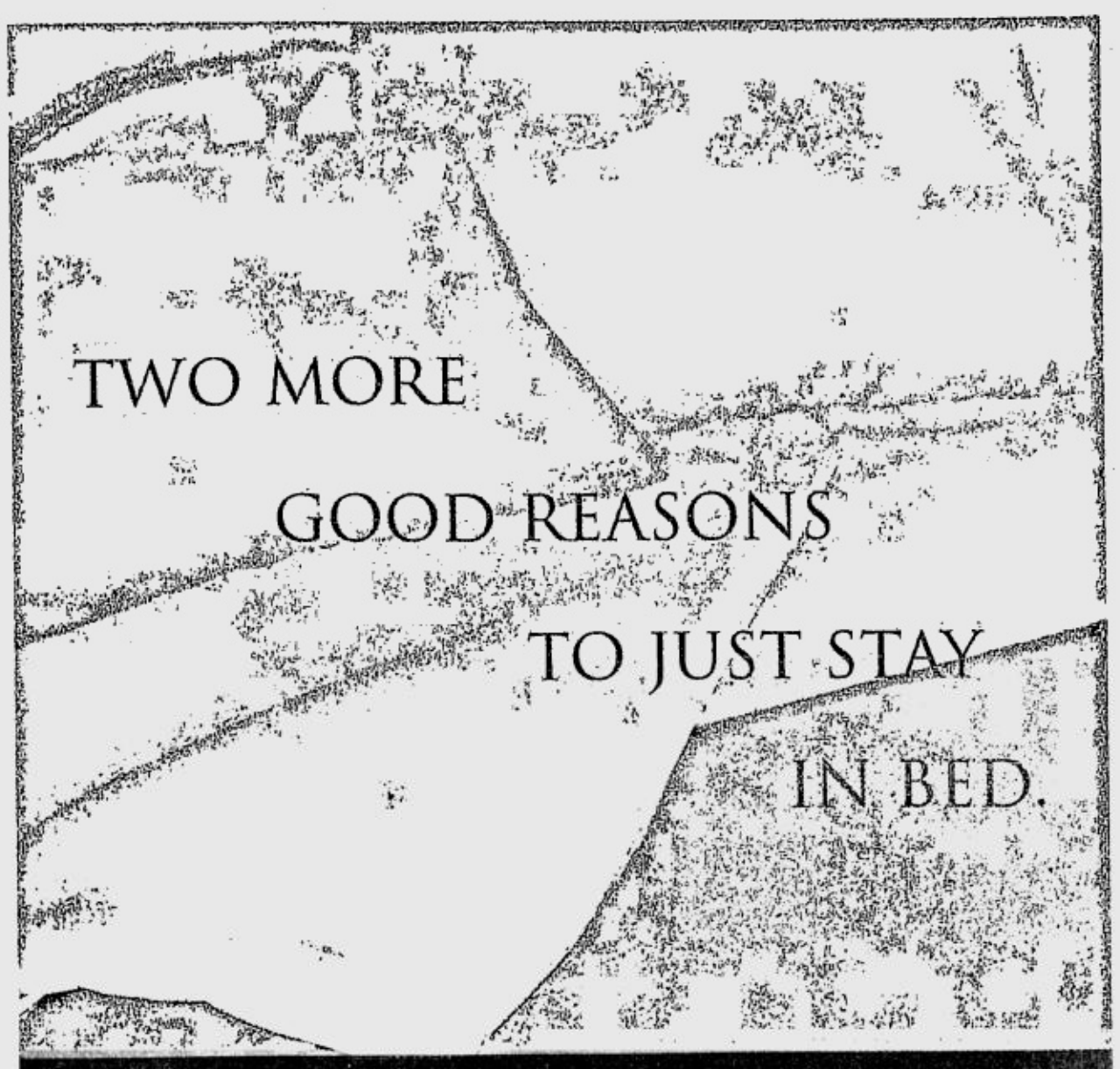
The Filipino seaman was earlier identified as Carlos Flores Santiago, 45. The other missing crewmen were Indian nationals.

The 20 other members of the Selendang Ayu's crew and all the Coast Guard helicopter crewmen were rescued.

Late Friday, the ship's owner issued a statement about the end of the active search.

"At this very sad moment, I am deeply appreciative for the many heroic efforts made by the men and women of the US Coast Guard," said Peter Chew, group managing director for IMC Shipping.

Reuters



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Celebrating

PASKONG PINOY
PUSONG PINOY
with Globe and DOT

Tourists and park-goers enjoying the laid-back ambience of Luneta were treated to a visual showcase of the heart and soul of the Filipino Christmas last Thursday, December 9, with the opening festivities of *Paskong Pinoy, Pusong Pinoy* 2004.

Led by the Department of Tourism and Globe Handyphone, the festival is a celebration of all things that make Christmas in the Philippines truly special. The renowned Manila sunset was upstaged by the parade of traditional lanterns along the roads leading to Rizal Park, where student dance troupes and cultural performers from various localities dazzled the audience with their stylized renditions of indigenous dances and unique holiday choreography. Colorful facets of local culture were represented by select performances highlighting popular festivals like the *Higantes* of Angono and the Angels Festival of San Rafael, Bulacan.

Tourism secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano officially opened *Paskong Pinoy, Pusong Pinoy* with a few inspirational words. "The Philippines is known for having colorful Christmas traditions," said Durano, "but the heart of the Christmas season is the generosity of the Filipino people."

More than just a showcase of Filipino Christmas traditions, *Paskong Pinoy, Pusong Pinoy* embodies holiday spirit and goodwill, serving as a donation drive for the victims of typhoons "Winnie" and "Yoyong." Philippine National Red Cross chairperson, the honorable Senator Richard Gordon, was on hand to witness the ceremonial turnover of proceeds from the DOT- and Globe-led program, and initiated the lighting of the 42-foot Pinoy Christmas Tree, which was adorned by lanterns symbolizing pledges from individuals and donor corporations. Providing a befittingly solemn end to the program was the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Dance Company, who performed excerpts of Nativity re-enactments from all over the Philippines.

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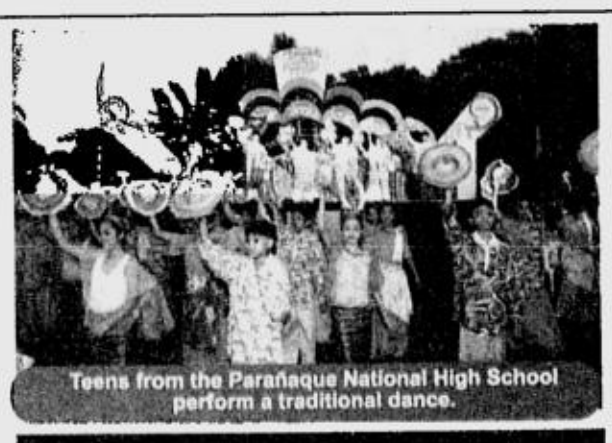
Teens from the Parañaque National High School perform a traditional dance.

Festively costumed CEU dance troupe members strike a pose.

The men and women of *Koro Bulakeño* sing the national anthem.

Angels from San Rafael, Bulacan, take flight in Luneta.

The *Mananayaw ng Makati* treat the audience to stunning holiday eye candy.

Senator and Philippine National Red Cross chairman Richard Gordon receives donated funds from Tourism secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano.

Lanterns adorning the 42-foot Pinoy Christmas Tree represent hope for the victims of typhoons "Winnie" and "Yoyong."

Head of Globe Corporate Marketing Rita Nisperos and Secretary Durano seal the Globe-DOT partnership.

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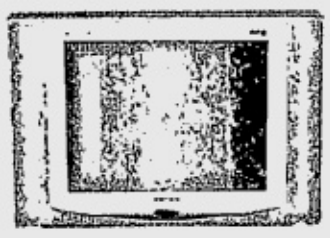

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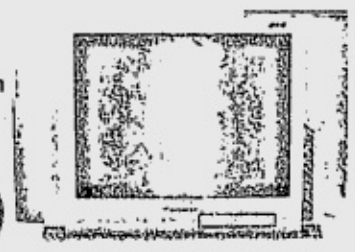

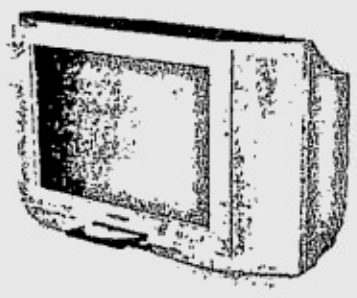

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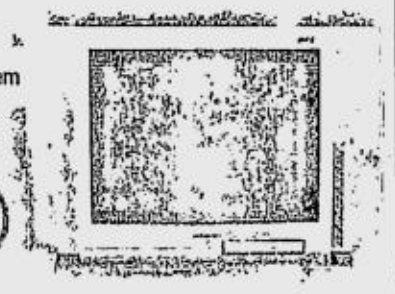

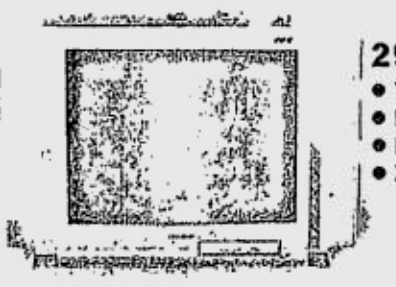

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A6

Higher oil prices seen

CONSUMERS should be prepared for possible oil price spikes as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) decided last week to cut production by one million barrels per day.

The Department of Energy (DOE) yesterday warned that the output cut could result in further volatility in world oil prices.

While the DOE did not categorically say that this would readily translate to higher local pump prices, it advised consumers to use petroleum products efficiently as international market prices remained unpredictable.

"We would continue to monitor developments both in the world and local oil markets," said the DOE in a statement yesterday.

The 11-member Opec decided at its Dec. 10 meeting in Cairo, Egypt, to lower production to 27 million barrels per day by Jan. 1, 2005, from the current 28 million barrels per day.

Opec cited the need to arrest the downward trend in world oil prices as the reason for deciding on the output cut.

Abigail L. Ho

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FPJ in coma; next 72 hours crucial

From page A1

Her cell phone had been turned off since early morning.

Throughout his movie career spanning more than half a century, Poe—Ronald Allan Poe in real life—often portrayed the role of the underdog who overcame the toughest of odds to emerge victorious in the end.

'Still comatose'

The question that gripped millions of moviegoers around the country yesterday was: Will their film hero win this, the biggest fight of his life?

Poe was brought to the hospital at about 11:30 p.m. on Saturday after he complained of feeling dizzy while in the middle of a dinner party with his movie staff and friends at his studio on San Francisco del Monte Avenue in Quezon City.

"Right now he is critically ill. He is still comatose," neurologist Dr. Anastacio Aquino told reporters yesterday noon. "It may take at least 72 hours for us to say anything more."

Aquino denied reports by some of Poe's visitors, including his friends, that the actor had suffered a series of strokes after he was brought to the hospital.

"Don't believe those things," the doctor told the INQUIRER. "He suffered only one stroke."

Poe was placed on life support at about 4 p.m. yesterday, according to Susan Tagle, the actor's longtime assistant.

"Susan is calm," former actress Anabel Rama told the INQUIRER in Filipino in an interview, referring to Poe's wife. "I heard the doctor explain to her that they still have to determine if an operation should be performed on Ronnie. The doctor told her Ronnie has a blood clot in the lower part of his brain."

Rama said she heard the news that Poe had suffered a stroke at 2:30 a.m. yesterday.

"I saw him being wheeled ... to the ICU," Rama said. "His right arm was moving, but he did not appear to be conscious. He was breathing through an oxygen mask."

Vigil at Room 336

Movie personalties streamed into the hospital through the day to be close to the stricken actor.

Poe was already unconscious when his wife arrived at his bedside at the hospital at about 12:30 a.m. Sunday, a witness said. She was composed and seemed to serve as a reassuring presence to relatives and close friends, the witness added.

"Mr. FPJ is still comatose," Escudero said at a press conference, breaking the grim news. "According to his doctor, there was a clot or blockage in his vertebral stem in the head.

"The affected area is the right hemisphere of his brain," he added. "According to the doctor, this condition occurs suddenly."

A team of doctors led by Aquino, a longtime acquaintance of the Poes, was conducting a battery of tests on the actor.

"The treatment being administered is that he is being trumbulized or his veins and arteries are being pumped so nothing bad will happen to him," Escudero said. "He is responding to medication but he is in a (comatose) condition."

Call for prayers

Poe's allies organized a vigil at the nearby Christ The King seminary compound.

Stressing that the coming hours were important, Escudero said: "We are asking for prayers."

He said that during the party, a friend asked Poe about the presidential electoral protest he had filed in the Supreme Court.

During the dinner, the actor was bubbly and visibly in his element, friends said.

No sign of illness

"We were drinking and eating. We were on our second beers and the conversation was lively," Escudero said, recalling the moment before the actor fell ill.

Escudero said 20-30 people were at the party which began at about 9 p.m.

Dishes of beef, pork and fish were served. "He (Poe) didn't eat pork," an aide said.

"*Walang lechon baboy* (No roasted pig)," Escudero said.

Strong constituency

A source in the Poe camp claimed the actor was into his fourth beer when he complained of dizziness.

Escudero said there had been no signs that Poe was suffering from any illness. "He has a strong constituency ... He has returned to training after the 90-day campaign."

Escudero said Poe had no prior medical condition that could explain his falling ill. "He is not even taking maintenance medicine," he said.

Asked by journalists if Poe was drinking Saturday night, Escudero said this could not be related to what happened. "Please, let us not link the two," he said.

"He's hanging in there," said Sen. Francis Pangilinan on leaving the ICU with his wife, actress Sharon Cuneta, at 7:15 p.m.

A doctor curtly said: "As of now, his condition is not good."

Another source said that a few days ago, the actor fell to his knees while playing with the child of actress Sheryl Cruz and had complained of dizziness.

Some reporters who covered Poe's presidential campaign had seen him take a puff or two of menthol cigarettes during evening breaks and after private dinners.

If certain accounts were to be believed, Poe, known for his drinking prowess in his younger years, had drinking bouts supposedly lasting until sunrise.

His known favorite beverage is San Miguel beer, of which he was one of the most successful endorsers.

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Bomb explodes at GenSan market

From page A1

as September on alleged plans by the Abu Sayyaf to bomb the city.

"I don't want to speculate at this point on any group that could be behind the attack because there are so many rebel groups operating in the city," he said. "It's too premature to pin the blame on any particular group at this time."

Plan to burn market

But Mayor Pedro Acharon dismissed talk that the attack was the work of terrorist groups. He said he had received reports that two groups of stall owners were fighting for control of the market.

"We have been on alert because we learned about a plan to burn the market four days ago," he told reporters. "This will hurt the city's efforts to attract investors and tourists."

South Dadiangas chair George Catapang Jr. said that as early as Friday, his men had received a report from an informant that there was a plan to burn the market.

Catapang said another village official, Quintin Catolico, reported the alleged plot to city police Chief Supt. Willie Dangane, who had sent policemen to the market.

Names of victims

Killed at the blast site were Erning Plasabas, Renato Kausing and a still unidentified female.

Five-year-old Nico Plomeda, Rokma Adam, Joselyn Beñas and Tomasa Villaber died while being treated at St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Those who died at General Santos Doctors Hospital were Divina Panaligan, Degoy Sabilita, Eduardo Beñas, Rosalinda Morales, Jemuel Plasabas and an unidentified child.

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, told the INQUIRER last night that the Red Cross had brought 50 bags of blood to the hospitals. An additional 60 bags will be made available, he said.

Gordon said Fr. Louie Fuentestina, a member of the Red Cross board in the city, had performed the last rites on some of the fatalities.

In April 2002, 14 people were killed while more than 60 others were wounded when a bomb exploded at the Filmart shopping center here.

The attack was blamed on the Abu Sayyaf, but security officials say the JI planned, financed and directed the attack. *With a report from Reuters*

'Low-profile' Santa teaches pupils true holiday spirit

From page A1

4 to 6-year-olds, opened his Golden Book and read out in Filipino:

"Good morning, children. I come from the heavens ... with this message from Mother Mary: 'The Christ is about to be born, and he will need clothes for the cold, dark nights. But the clothes I've made for him still lack warmth, the kind of warmth that children can give through love.'

"That's why I came to see you, and along the way I found Ruprecht," St. Nick said, referring to the beggarly being beside him. "I found him sleeping in the bushes, woke him up lest he miss Christmas, and took him along in my journey.

"I see the light in your hearts ... but also the bad thoughts that cause that light to fade. Now, let's see how you fare in my Golden Book."

What followed was St. Nick's "roll call" of the students, calling each to his side and announcing how each had behaved—or misbehaved—in class and at play. (Of course, the man playing St. Nick based his Golden Book on the Tita's actual evaluation of her wards.)

One boy, for example, got a pat on the back for being "sweet *(malambing)* and helpful" to his classmates. But he was also reminded to "always clean up" after eating and to stop being "a crybaby *(palasumbong)*."

One of the girls got admired for being "a fast runner" but St. Nick hoped she would only be so "outside, not inside, the classroom."

Another pupil got a mixed review: "Very quiet in class, quite a loner, but helps around, especially when it's time to clean up the toys."

Overwhelmed by the goings-on, a boy who got called halfway through the roll call broke into a loud cry when asked to come forward. Tita had to step in; she wrapped him in an embrace and assured him that St. Nick meant well.

Another boy fidgeted in his seat when called by the mysterious visitor who seemed privy to all the students' virtues and dark secrets. But he didn't cry, especially after two of his female seatmates rose and took him gently by the arm, egging him to conquer his fears.

After the evaluation, each child received two gifts from St. Nick: a golden nut (this year, a pili nut painted in gold was used) that could be worn as a pendant, and a handful of gift-wrapped cookies.

Before leaving, St. Nick asked the class to sing a religious hymn "that will help me carry the love you offer to Mama Mary." Ruprecht, who said nothing during the whole exercise, followed him out of the room.

Change of heart

The experience, likely to be unforgettable, is meant to teach the Waldorf kids that Christmas calls for a change of heart, not just an exchange of presents, according to a school official.

"To have a Santa Claus around would be too commercial. We want to go back to the basics and teach the children the true essence of Christmas, rather than highlight gift-giving," said Mary Joan Fajardo, cofounder of Waldorf Philippines.

Fajardo said the activity was based on a "legend" about St. Nicholas, a bishop who lived in 270-300 BC in what is now Turkey, and who inspired the more popular Santa Claus after devotion to the saint spread to the United States in the 17th century.

In the legend, Ruprecht represents "the rough, animal side" of people that St. Nick managed to tame, "the balance between the good and the bad," she said.

The golden nut "tells us that even though we are hard on the outside, we can find something soft and good inside us if we would only crack the hard shell."

The cookies (sometimes oranges) are simply the "rewards" for the kids for staying nice, not naughty.

Charcoal

To ensure surprise, St. Nick's arrival is "never announced" to the class, and the identity of the actor (either a volunteer parent of one of the Waldorf students in the higher classes or a total outsider) goes unrevealed, Fajardo said.

The activity is designed only for the kindergarten pupils in view of their young, highly impressionable age. Of course, as they grow older, they find out that everything was staged, but "they still get the message of St. Nicholas," said a smiling Tony Montemayor, a Waldorf parent who also volunteers as school development officer.

St. Nick also visits the higher grades on that day but, Montemayor said, "he only passes by the classrooms and leaves at each door a sack" containing gifts, pouches of charcoal, and a scroll.

The charcoal represents the bad habits that the student must overcome: the more charcoal, the naughtier he/she has been. The scroll will be read out by the teacher in the same way that St. Nick recited from his book before the kindergarten bunch.

"Getting their charcoal, that's the fun part for the students because they compare it with what they or their classmates got last year," Montemayor said.

Playful but profound

It's not surprising to find such playful yet profound campus activities at Waldorf, an internationally accredited private school operating since 1994 in a middle-class enclave on Vinzons Street, Heroes Hills, in Quezon City.

Adhering to the Waldorf education system that originated in Germany in 1919 shortly after World War I, the lone Philippine campus is one of the over 700 Waldorf schools operating in over 50 countries worldwide.

Located on a 3,000-sq.m. lot, the school currently has some 200 students from kindergarten to Grade 8, and also runs a parent education program wherein parents report three days a week together with their kids.

Of the many praises heaped on the school, one major aspect sets it apart from other regular learning institutes: Its students are discouraged from watching TV or using computers.

The school believes in what Montemayor called "age-appropriate" methods of teaching. The curriculum goes way beyond the three Rs and instead immerses the students in self-learning sessions through art or music, gardening or handicraft making. Social skills and self-confidence are built through play and group games.

Inside, not outside

But why shun TV?

Watching television "can weaken the child's imagination," Waldorf teacher Rowena Miral-Sy contended. "We want them to rely on their own imagination, like when solving problems or storytelling."

Co-teacher Edelvita Anonat added: "We want the TV to be something that is inside their minds, not outside."

Montemayor further noted: "Kids get so much inputs and stimuli coming from TV, too much for their age. They would rather learn through play than by becoming couch potatoes."

In Montemayor's opinion as a parent, introducing the children to the "low-key" St. Nicholas rather than the telegenic Santa Claus is an "extension" of the same philosophy.

According to Waldorf, St. Nicholas is an "archetypal figure of heavenly wisdom" and Santa Claus, "a more earth-bound, incarnated figure."

"One can understand how he (Santa) arose in our more materialistic, secular age, and one can hold him in a positive way for the sake of the children who love him so, but one can also create a place in the Advent season to bring the original, more heavenly St. Nicholas to the children," it said.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Ukraine opposition leader likely poisoned, doctors say

KIEV—Ukraine's presidential election lit up Saturday with a doctor's report that opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko was likely poisoned, in a stunning disclosure two weeks before a rerun vote that he is increasingly likely to win.

The news drew no immediate reaction from Yushchenko's rival Viktor Yanukovich, who was on a campaign stump in pro-Russian regions of southeastern Ukraine ahead of the Dec. 26 vote.

But analysts said the report could help Yushchenko claim power, finally resolving this former Soviet republic's worst political crisis since its independence in 1991.

Western-leaning Yushchenko has alleged repeatedly that he was poisoned ahead of the first round of voting on Oct. 31. His face became disfigured and he was forced into an Austrian hospital in critical condition with internal bleeding.

The medical chief of the Rudolfinerhaus clinic in Vienna said that tests showed Yushchenko had suffered from dioxin poisoning—a toxin in the Agent Orange defoliant widely used by the United States during the Vietnam war.

"There is no doubt about the fact that the disease has been caused by a case of poisoning by dioxin," said Michael Zimpfer.

"We have found levels of dioxin in the body caused by oral ingestion," he told a news conference at the private clinic. "We suspect a cause triggered by a third party." Zimpfer said the clinic's conclusion was based on skin changes and tests on blood and tissue samples.

The report met with silence from Yanukovich's camp and drew no comment from outgoing President Leonid Kuchma, who had initially groomed his prime minister for power.

But in Washington, a State Department spokesperson said the United States was "deeply concerned about these findings" and urged Ukrainian authorities to investigate.

Ukraine's public prosecutors office reopened its investigation following the announcement by Yushchenko's doctors in Vienna, Interfax news agency reported.

In October their investigation concluded Yushchenko was suffering from a fever caused by a virus that affected his liver.

Analysts said the poisoning disclosure could deliver a fatal blow to Yanukovich's chances in the upcoming vote, staged as a rerun of a flawed Nov. 21 runoff election.

"This helps Yushchenko and will seriously hurt his opponent, although it will be difficult to prove that he was involved," said political analyst Volodymyr Malinkovich.

"If before I thought that Yushchenko would win 52 percent of the vote, now I think that it is more likely to rise to 60," he said.

Yushchenko charged again Friday that he was convinced that he was poisoned in a political vendetta launched by a ruling elite that was frightened of losing its hold on power.

"I believe now more and more that what happened to me was an act of a settling of political scores," he told reporters. "The aim was to kill me." *AFP*

YUSHCHENKO before and after his mysterious illness. On the left, Yushchenko is seen on July 4, 2004. On the right, with his face disfigured, Dec. 10, 2004. AP

Bush healthy but laments weight gain

BETHESDA, Md.—US President George W. Bush was declared to be in "superior" health after his annual physical exam on Saturday but lamented a weight gain he blamed on months of campaign travel.

"Although I think the doctor put out a report that shows me to be physically fit—I'm still able to get on the stress test—I'm a little overweight," he said. "Therefore, I fully intend to lose some inches off my waistline and pounds off my frame. But other than that, I feel great."

BUSH AP

Bush, 58, said it was clear he had just gone through a campaign after he stepped on the scale during his exam at the National Naval Medical Center in the Washington suburb of Bethesda, Maryland.

"I've obviously have gone through a campaign where I probably ate too many doughnuts, if you get my drift," he said.

"My New Year's resolution has become apparent by getting on the scales." The nearly 6-foot Bush weighs just shy of 91 kg. His weight had crept up from 88 kg at his last physical in August 2003.

Although many people often remark on Bush's fitness, his weight gain gives him a body mass index of 27, putting him in the category of the more than 60 percent of Americans who are overweight. A body mass index of 25 or above is considered overweight.

But Bush's blood pressure and pulse were in a very healthy range, in keeping with his fitness habits of working out six times per week.

A team of 10 doctors led by Dr. Richard Tubb, Bush's personal physician, and Dr. Kenneth Cooper, head of the Cooper Aerobics Center, issued a statement saying they "find him to be fit for duty and have every reasonable expectation that he will remain fit for duty for the duration of his presidency."

The doctors described Bush's health as being in the top fifth percentile for a man his age.

Elaborating on the physical exam, White House spokesperson Claire Buchan said, "They determined that he is in superior health overall for a man his age." *Reuters*

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Washington Post: US spying on ElBaradei

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush's administration has listened in on phone calls between Mohamed ElBaradei and Iranian diplomats, seeking ammunition to oust ElBaradei as head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency, the Washington Post said Sunday.

"The intercepted calls have not produced any evidence of nefarious conduct by ElBaradei," the Post said, quoting three unnamed US officials who had read the transcripts.

"Some people think he sounds way too soft on the Iranians, but that's about it," one official was quoted as saying.

The United States wants the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, which ElBaradei heads, to report Iran to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions over what Washington says is a covert nuclear weapons program.

But ElBaradei says the "jury is still out" on whether Tehran's program is peaceful or not.

The Egyptian diplomat, 62, also earned the ire of Washington by questioning US intelligence on Iraq. The Bush administration opposes his winning a third term in 2005 as IAEA chief.

The official US position is that heads of international organizations should not serve more than two terms, as ElBaradei will have done by next year.

Washington has no clear candidate to replace him but is nevertheless "searching for material" to support its argument that he should step down, the Post said.

"Anonymous accusations against ElBaradei made by US officials in recent weeks are part of an orchestrated campaign" to oust him, the paper said, quoting "several senior policymakers" who spoke on condition of anonymity.

These accusations include an unproven charge that ElBaradei withheld damning evidence on Iran's activities from the IAEA board, it noted.

Washington's top favorite to replace ElBaradei is Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, but he has been unwilling to challenge the IAEA chief, the Post said.

The deadline for submitting alternative candidates, Dec. 31, is fast approaching.

"Our original strategy was to get Alex Downer to throw his hat in the ring, but we couldn't," a US policy maker told the Post. "Anyone in politics will tell you that you can't beat somebody with nobody, but we're going to try to disprove that." *AFP*

Weather stalls efforts to contain Alaska spill

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—About 150 people have been sent to an Aleutian island to try to clean up fuel oil streaming from a wrecked cargo ship, but harsh weather has kept most from the spill site, federal and state officials said on Saturday.

Authorities earlier said they had called off the search for six missing crew members, who were not wearing cold-water survival gear, and efforts were now concentrated on preventing environmental damage in a sensitive area important to marine mammals, sea birds and fish.

An aerial survey found oil leaking from both halves of the severed cargo ship, which grounded off the western coast of Unalaska Island on Wednesday, officials said. But responders have been unable to board the wreckage for inspections, and have just begun to seal off important salmon-spawning streams.

"We're working in a remote area with difficult weather right now," said US Coast Guard Capt. Ron Morris, the federal on-scene coordinator.

"It seems to be stopping some of the progress that we'd like to make to get on scene. It's very difficult to plan and to execute if you can't get out there and the weather keeps your helicopters grounded," he said. Reuters

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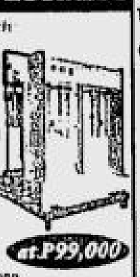

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Grenade blast kills 2 at Sri Lanka concert

COLOMBO — Two people were killed and 11 wounded when a hand grenade was lobbed into the VIP section of the audience at a concert led by Indian film superstar Shah Rukh Khan and two other actors, police said.

Both the dead were Sri Lankans, news reports said. The Indian star, Bollywood's most popular heartthrob, and other performers were unhurt, a police officer told Reuters.

Someone threw the grenade as Khan was performing on stage at the end of a three-hour show which had drawn protests from the Indian Ocean island's majority Sinhala Buddhist community.

"There were close to 1,500 police and military personnel providing security here, we are baffled as to how the attacker smuggled in the grenade," said senior police superintendent Sarath Lugoda.

A spokesperson for the event organizers said the Indian film star had been rushed backstage when the explosion occurred and was a "bit rattled" by the blast.

Back in Bombay early on Sunday, Khan—currently India's most commercially successful star—told reporters at the airport that he felt the attack was not related to Buddhist protests against the concert.

A few hours before the show began, large crowds of protesters led by Buddhist monk parliamentarians had clashed with riot police near the concert venue. *Reuters*

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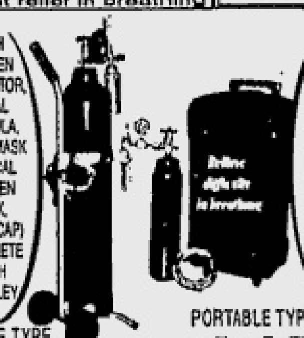

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Day 04 - HO CHI MINH - MANILA
After breakfast have a halfday city tour of dynamic Ho Chi Minh City, still called Saigon by many locals, takes in the former Presidential Palace, the Notre Dame Cathedral Old Saigon Post Office, a lacquerware factory and Thien hau Pagoda in the city's bustling chinatown. Then to Tan Son Nhat airport for departure.
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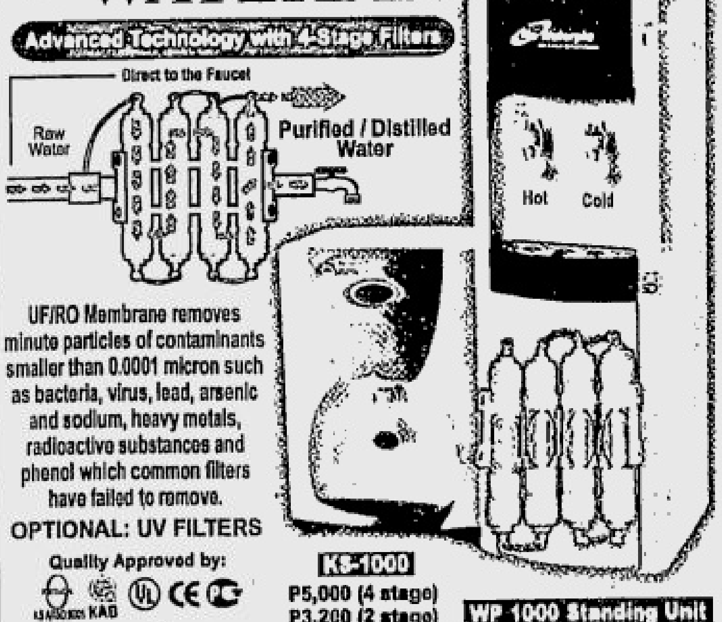

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US plane bombs Mosul rebels

MOSUL, Iraq—A US aircraft dropped a quarter-ton (500 lb) bomb on the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Saturday after guerrillas attacked a US patrol that was trying to capture an insurgent arms dump, a military spokesperson said.

The powerful blast shook the west of the city. There was an "unknown number of enemy casualties" and eight soldiers were slightly wounded, Lt. Col. Paul Hastings said.

Insurgents had set off a car bomb and then opened fire with rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars on the unit that moved on the arms cache. Troops later destroyed the weapons.

Earlier in the day in the city, where the Sunni Arab insurgency has been particularly active in the past month, another car bomb exploded near a US military convoy wounding at least two passersby, witnesses and the US army said.

Three high-ranking Iraqi police officers and seven Iraqi National Guardsmen were among those killed in other violence across the country.

The Guardsmen were killed in the town of Hit in western Iraq when gunmen ambushed their minibus, Capt. Ahmad Jassem of the US-backed force said. Three others were wounded.

In southern Baghdad, gunmen assassinated a police brigadier and a colonel, a police source said. Near the northern town of Ash Sharqat a police colonel was one of two officers killed in an ambush. Three others, including a colonel, were wounded.

A car bomb exploded in the center of the ethnically divided northern oil capital of Kirkuk, badly damaging a US Humvee patrol vehicle and wounding two soldiers and an interpreter, the US military said. The wounded were in a stable condition.

Security officials and civil servants have become prime targets for insurgents opposed to the US military occupation and to Iraqis working for the US-backed authorities. There are fears violence may increase before an election on Jan. 30.

A bomb damaged an office for election workers in the town of Zab, southwest of Kirkuk, wounding a civilian, police said.

Four employees of the Education Ministry were wounded when the bus taking them to work in Baghdad was raked by gunfire.

A civilian motorist was wounded on the main highway between Hilla and Kerbala, south of the capital, when a roadside bomb went off, missing a convoy of National Guards, police said.

In Kirkuk, US troops and Iraqi police sealed off the area where the car bomb exploded. M/Sgt. Robert Powell, a spokesperson for US forces in the area, said it was believed to have been remotely detonated and not a suicide bomb attack.

Close to the same spot, the provincial governor of Kirkuk survived an assassination bid when a car bomb exploded near his convoy a month ago on Nov. 11. At least 16 people were wounded.

Tension has risen in Kirkuk between Arabs, Kurds and Turkish-speaking Turkmen since Saddam Hussein was toppled last year. *Reuters*

Contract killers targeting troops, says commander

SYDNEY—Contract killers are being paid a bounty of US$50 to target coalition troops in Iraq, Australia's military commander in the Middle East said Sunday.

In an interview with the Sunday Telegraph newspaper, Air Commodore Greg Evans said leaders of the Iraqi insurgency had turned to foreign hitmen in their battle against the US-led coalition.

"This is a difficult adversary, the insurgency is not a coherent force," Evans told the newspaper.

"We are seeing zealots brought in from outside Iraq and paid US$50 for contract killings. These forces are a general threat to the coalition."

Evans, who took command of Australian troops in Iraq three weeks ago, also said the insurgency was likely to intensify ahead of elections scheduled for the end of January.

He said he expected a "campaign of murder" by insurgents.

"They will use every odious mechanism available to them, and that means violence," he said.

Australia has about 900 military personnel in and around Iraq and was one of the original "coalition of the willing" partners that joined last year's US-led invasion.

The Australian contingent has so far suffered no fatalities in Iraq. *AFP*

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 13, 2004
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Num 24:2-7, 15-17
Gospel: Mt 21:23-27

Jesus had entered the Temple and was teaching when the chief priests, the teachers of the Law and the Jewish authorities came to him and asked, "What authority have you to act like this? Who gave you authority to do all this?"

Jesus answered them, "I will also ask you a question, only one. And if you give me an answer, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. When John began to baptize, was it a work of God, or was it merely something human?"

They reasoned out among themselves, "If we reply that it was a work of God, he will say: Why, then, did you not believe him? And if we say: The baptism of John was merely something human, beware of the people: since all hold John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know."

And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what right I do these things."

Commentary

St. Jerome (c. 340-420) wrote, "The Lord could have confuted them... by a simple answer, but He put a question to them of such skillful contrivance, that they must be condemned either by their silence or their knowledge." And St. John Chrysostom (347-407) added, "Even if He had told them, it would have profited nothing, because the darkened will cannot perceive the things that are of the light. For we ought to instruct the one who inquires; but the one who is only testing we ought to overthrow by a stroke of reasoning, and not to reveal to him the power of the mystery."

It's a very wonderful thing to read the insights of those who lived many centuries before us. We can do so because of the scholarship of countless people through the centuries. We are never alone when we read the Scriptures; they are a sacred heritage passed on to God's people of every century. It's sometimes said that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Often, I think, we only cling to their coat-tails. I love to quote them, because it makes clear that we stand in an ancient tradition and the insights of all the ages are ours to have, as far as we are capable of them. T.S. Eliot wrote, "There never was a time, I believe, when those who read at all read so many more books by living authors than books by dead authors; there never was a time so completely parochial, so shut off from the past."

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Pro-independence Chen loses Taiwan poll

TAIPEI—The pro-independence party of Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian suffered a surprise defeat in weekend legislative elections that could ease tensions with China but paralyze government on the democratic island.

Without a clear mandate in parliament, Chen will find it hard to push through his plan to write a new constitution and thus enshrine his ambitions to transform the status of the island that China claims as a renegade province.

"Taiwan voters have clearly chosen to put the brakes on the pan-green camp," the China Times said in a Sunday editorial, referring to the color of Chen's Democratic Progressive Party.

"Rather than saying most voters voted for pan-blue, we should say they opted to maintain stability," it said. The opposition Nationalists, or Kuomintang, fought the election under a blue flag and on a manifesto more conciliatory toward Beijing.

The party of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek that fled the mainland in 1949 and is committed to some form of reunification emerged the biggest winner, taking 79 seats, up from 68 in 2001. Overall, the opposition alliance took 114 of the 225 seats.

The DPP remained the single largest party but gained only two seats for a total of 89. Along with its hardline pro-independence ally, the Taiwan Solidarity Union, they control just 101 seats.

Any form of French-style cohabitation is unlikely because the two have long been bitterly opposed and their leaders are barely on speaking terms. The deadlock is likely to frustrate Chen's political aims and slow the drive to independence.

"China and the United States will be breathing a sigh of temporary relief," said Zhu Feng, head of the international security program at Peking University.

Chiu Tai-san, a vice chairman of Taiwan's policymaking Mainland Affairs Council and a member of Chen's party, said the DPP needed to review its strategy.

"I think mainland China will see this election result as a sign that there is still a political force in Taiwan that can restrain and balance Chen Shui-bian's China policy," Chiu said.

Analysts in Taiwan agreed that the increasingly strident tone of pro-independence parties toward the end of the election campaign may have scared voters who in March had reelected Chen as president—if only by the slimmest of margins.

"Chen Shui-bian should take full responsibility for the DPP loss. He appeared too reckless, he said too much, too quickly," said high school teacher Cheng Mei-chu. "All those things he said during the campaign made me very nervous."

Chen was swift to try to make peace with his opponents.

"The end of the election should be the beginning of reconciliation and cooperation," Chen said on Saturday as the extent of the opposition victory became clear. *Reuters*

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BURMA NOVICE
A Buddhist novice walks through the grounds of a temple in the Burma town of Bago Dec. 11. One of the most isolated and closed countries in the world on account of its military government, Burma is famous as a haven for Buddhist spirituality untainted by modern Western influence. REUTERS

US, Japan agreed on joint plan on possible Korea war, says report

TOKYO—Japan and the United States have agreed on a joint plan on strategy to be followed should war break out on the Korean peninsula, a Japanese newspaper said on Sunday.

The report of the plan, which the Asahi Shimbun said was signed in 2002, comes days after Japan unveiled a revamped defense policy that hints at a shift from the purely defensive posture in place since its defeat in World War II.

The plan is sure to offend North Korea, which regularly denounces Japanese military cooperation with the United States.

The scenario envisages Japan providing support for US troops fighting in Korea. The Japanese would at the same time be guarding against possible invasion by hundreds of North Korean agents, Asahi said, without citing sources.

Under the plan, code-numbered 5055, Japan's military has agreed to help out with search and rescue for US troops missing in action, Asahi said. Japan would also guard 135 possible military targets such as US bases and nuclear power stations along its northwestern coast, the article said.

Japanese marine forces with minesweepers would work to keep open shipping lanes between the Korean peninsula and the north coast of Japan's southern main island of Kyushu, the paper said. *Reuters*

Heron in HK being tested for lethal bird flu

HONG KONG—A wild bird which died of avian flu in Hong Kong was being tested Sunday for the lethal strain that has killed 32 people in Southeast Asia this year, the government said.

The grey heron is suspected to have been infected with an H5 flu but a government spokesperson said further tests were being carried out to see if it was the deadly H5N1 variant.

If confirmed it will be the third time this year a migratory bird has been found with the virus in the southern Chinese enclave where seven years ago bird flu first mutated into a form lethal to humans.

The bird was found sick in the rural New Territories on Dec. 3. It was taken away to a government vet lab where it later died.

No other birds or poultry farms within a 5-km radius had been affected, the government said. *AFP*

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Singaporean virtue?

EDITORIAL

BEWARE of Singaporean prime ministers bearing gifts; these always come wrapped in the unseasonal colors of candid advice. The only difference in last week's visit by new Singaporean Premier Lee Hsien Loong? His advice was solicited by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself.

At a joint news conference in Malacañang, the President asked Lee, the son of the famously frank founder Lee Kuan Yew, to share Singapore's "best practices" in governance. Lee, proving himself every inch his father's son, needed no further prodding.

He spoke about how Singapore "inherited a clean system" from the British, and how the party in power since independence "kept it clean." He also said that the island-state took its anti-corruption drive seriously. "Secondly, we established a mechanism to make sure that if anybody was corrupt, [he] would be found out, investigated and punished."

Candid; revealing about their implied contrast with Philippine experience; but resolutely conventional. What Lee offered was the stingiest kind of truth: explanations that did not explain, or at least did not explain enough. Other ex-outposts of the British empire, for instance, are also heirs of the British genius for administration; how many have risen to Singapore's level of success? Anti-corruption campaigns are not exactly China's strongest suit, but for almost two decades it has remained the world's fastest-growing economy.

There must be more, or at least something more specific to Singapore, in the Singapore experience. One answer lies in Lee's third "best practice."

At the joint news conference, Lee paid special attention to the issue of government wages. "If we don't pay [a public official] proper wages, even at the working level, he can't earn a living for himself and for his family." By "proper," he didn't mean merely the concept of a living wage, but a compensation package that compares favorably with international standards.

"So we made a virtue of paying our civil servants competitively. We require them to perform, but our philosophy is, Whatever [we pay] in wages is well worth the performance we get from them."

The whole idea is to tempt the most talented to make a career out of public service, and to pay them well enough to make corruption a non-issue.

Singapore has certainly taken this idea to heart. In 2000, for instance, the salary of Singapore's premier was pegged at US$1.1 million—five times that of the President of the United States, the chief executive of the world's largest economy. The salary of a Cabinet minister ranged from US$655,000 to US$820,000; at the lower end of the scale, the pay was already four times the salary of a US Cabinet secretary.

We understand that there has been at least one salary increase in the four years since. And we also realize that not all Singaporeans are happy with this state of affairs, especially when the salary of a high government official is compared with that of the ordinary citizen.

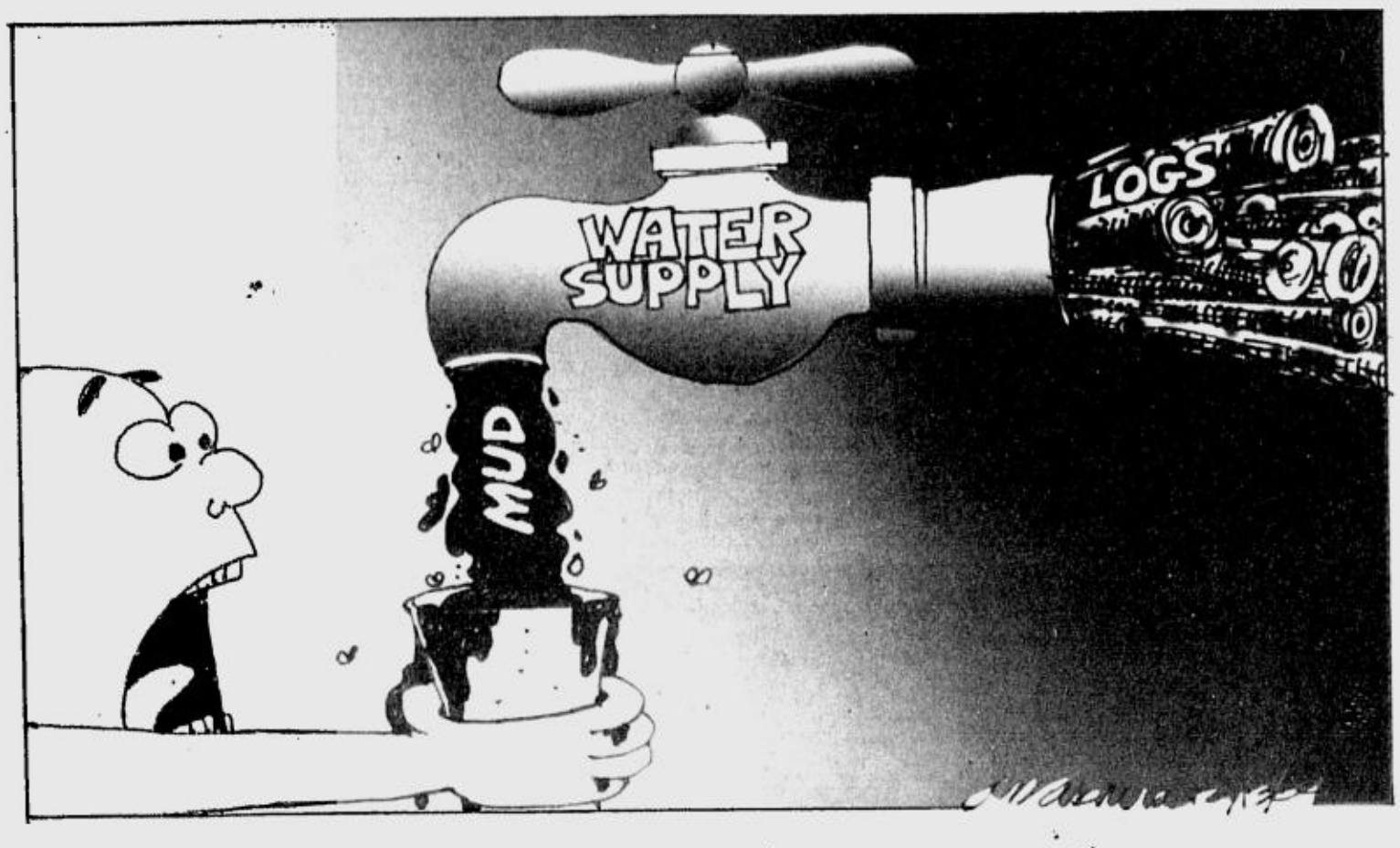
But there is no doubt that the Singapore success trajectory owes much of its momentum to this particular virtue.

Where a becoming silence would have been the best response to Lee's short discourse, the President reacted defensively. "With regard to the high pay of public servants, that is also my dream. But it's difficult to do that right now given our budget deficit. That's why we need to do fiscal reform so that we can afford a better-paid bureaucracy."

But is it merely a matter of fiscal reform? We think the deficit is being made a convenient scapegoat for all sorts of national sins. If, for the sake of argument, we imagine a time when the deficit has been reduced to practically zero, do we see the government staffed by higher-paid public servants?

The answer, as best as we can tell, is: No, not necessarily. Why is this so? Because the issue of high, competitive government wages is not reducible to fiscal reform, dire as that need is. The issue is cultural or, to be more precise, attitudinal.

Many Filipinos see public service as a reward in itself; the matter of compensation is at best a secondary consideration. We may see in this other-worldly attitude the triumph of idealism, but in the real world the link between low government wages and rampant government corruption is as solid as a ball-and-chain.



Had Wawa Dam been tapped

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ISN'T it ironic and paradoxical that only a few weeks after the floods and landslides that were caused by too much water, Administrator Orlando Hondrade of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System is already warning of a water shortage within a few months? He said that logs and mud unleashed by the floods have blocked the 13-km long tunnel through which water flows from the Umiray River in Quezon to the Angat Reservoir in Bulacan, the source of Metro Manila's water supply and irrigation for Bulacan and Pampanga farms. During the storm, water had to be released from the Angat Dam because it had already too much water and it was feared that the dam would break from the pressure. Now, there is danger that the dam would have too little water in summer, just when we need it most.

The government will of course blame it on nature, but that is not entirely correct. Part of the blame should be laid on the officials in charge of water supply. They did not provide for alternative sources of water although it has been a commonplace experience to have water shortages every summer, even if people are drowning in floods during the rainy season.

And there is a ready alternative source nearby just waiting to be tapped. In fact, it was the main source of water for Manila and its environs before it was replaced by Angat Dam. This is the Wawa Dam in nearby Rodriguez (Montalban), within a spitting distance from La Mesa Dam to which its water used to flow through steel pipes. When the pipes rusted, the MWSS did not replace them because, it said, it did not need the Wawa water anymore as the Angat water was enough for our needs.

It is not enough anymore. The population of Manila and suburbs has grown tremendously and the water distributors have increased the areas they are servicing. The government water agency should have tapped other sources a long time ago, as water shortages have increasingly become frequent. Instead, the MWSS abandoned Wawa Dam. It drilled more and more deep wells but the summer shortages continued. It would have been simpler and cheaper to install new pipes from Wawa to La Mesa. But for some strange reason, the government agency refused to do that although that is the logical thing to do.

Another strange thing: A private firm that was a partner in the construction of the $500-million Casecnan Dam in Nueva Ecija has offered to tap Wawa Dam at no cost to the government. It is willing to shoulder all the expenses for the project which is expected to solve the water shortages every summer and to extend water service to areas not yet reached by the two water franchise holders. The private firm, the San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders & Developers Group, will also reforest 27,700 hectares of the Wawa Dam watershed. But the government is hemming and hawing before giving the group the permit to harness Wawa Dam. Why?

The "delaying tactics" have been going on for 11 years. Meanwhile, millions of gallons of precious water flow down the Marikina and Pasig Rivers and wasted in the sea. During the recent storm, there was so much water that the dam overflowed and flooded Marikina.

Had the San Lorenzo Ruiz firm been allowed to develop the project years ago, it could have provided Metro Manila with another source of water while the Umiray tunnel was being repaired and unclogged. But the National Water Resources Board is seemingly reluctant to allow the firm to harness water from Wawa Dam.

The MWSS abandoned Wawa in 1968 or 36 years ago, saying it was "polluted." In 1998, the MWSS forecast that there will be an oversupply of water by 2010. It has been proven wrong both times. Wawa water is potable and it looks like the construction of the long abandoned Laiban Dam—from which the oversupply was expected—will not be resumed soon because of lack of funds.

Now the MWSS wants to tap Wawa Dam again. But it has forfeited its water permit. The Water Code provides that "non-use of the water for the purpose stipulated in the permit for a period of three consecutive years shall render such permit null and void," and the MWSS itself admitted that it had abandoned Wawa. In 1993, San Lorenzo Ruiz, at the height of a water shortage, filed an application for a water permit. Under the rules, "the rights to the use of water are deemed acquired as of their filing of the application of a permit" once a permit is approved. San Lorenzo Ruiz therefore now has priority over the water of Wawa.

One of the water concessionaires also wants to secure a water permit to tap Wawa River, but it has not applied for such a permit. Besides, it cannot both be a water producer and distributor at the same time, otherwise it would be a monopoly.

With San Lorenzo Ruiz clearly having the priority right to the water, the NWRB gave it a water permit—but only for 3.48 cubic meters per second and only for six months of the year (an average of 1.74 cubic meters per second, less 10 percent for ecological balance, for the whole year), whereas it applied for 18.3 cubic meters per second for the entire year. Besides, San Lorenzo Ruiz will be allowed to draw water from Wawa only from June to November, during the rainy season, but not during summer when its water is sorely needed by consumers.

The NWRB's justification is that the yearly average stream flow in the Wawa River is 4.52 cubic meters per second. The previous NWRB board, however, had clearly stated on Dec. 23, 1997 that the mean discharge of the stream flow was 18.1 cubic meters per second. If both are correct, that means the stream flow in Wawa has already been drastically reduced by 75 to 90 percent by 1997. This cannot be accurate, since that much reduction would have made the Philippines another Sahara desert which, of course, it is not.

Ropes

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE EULOGIES delivered during Fr. Cha Colendres' wake last week drove home one thing to me again—the heroism of the priests and laypeople who have built the Church of the Poor in Infanta. The real story about how Father Cha died is that he perished in a column of water full of logs that fell down on him and his assistant, Dionisio Cadungog, as they tried to make their way to Infanta by foot through the rice fields in the middle of the storm. But the things said about Father Cha during his wake showed me the original story, which was that he tied himself to a tree and threw the other end of the rope to a group of drowning folk, wasn't completely off the mark. It might not have been the story of his death, but it was the story of his life.

As well indeed as the lives—most of them happily still continuing ones—of the other priests and laity who have laid a stone or two in the edifice, or hillside shack, that is the church of Infanta. Chief of them Bishop Julio Labayen. The Church of the Poor owes in great part to him: he is its chief architect and stone-layer. It was his vision, determination, and self-sacrifice that raised it almost literally from the mud to what it now is today, a beacon in a windswept sea.

When Bishop Labayen and many of his priests came to the Prelature in the 1960s and 1970s, that part of the world was pretty much a land God forgot. Real got its electricity only in the late 1970s. Before that, one picnicked on the beach in the warm and breezy summer nights only by the light of the moon and stars. One really appreciated that light when winding one's way to one's cot after many swigs of *lambanog*, the kind made from nipa. People slept early. I remember a companion waking up in the middle of the night after having gone to bed early and demanding to know in the pitch darkness, "(Expletive) how long does a night take to end here?"

More to the point, going to Real was like taking a slow boat to Jolo, with the additional rigors of a land trip. It carried with it the same amount of hardship and uncertainty. The road after Siniloan was a narrow and dusty path that wound around the mountains. I recall that the trees in those mountains in the 1970s were tall and lush. In this Alice-in-Wonderland country, backwardness is often the poor's greatest defense. (The highway that came later wiped those trees out.) The buses that plied the route literally rumbled on, they creaked and groaned and sputtered. When they broke down, as they often did, people got down and walked the rest of the way. No one demanded to get his fare back on the ground of a contract not having been completed. One merely looked up to heaven and asked plaintively why.

It was into this world that Bishop Labayen, Fr. Nonong Pili, Fr. Boy Makabenta, Fr. Pites Bernardo, and others found themselves thrust decades ago. Father Pites died in the 1980s from a motorcycle accident, though some say the accident might have been staged by Marcos' henchmen. The others have their own stories to tell about the near-death experiences they had while building a church there. Father Boy nearly died there too one stormy night, when a flash flood swept him and his motorcycle away. He managed to survive only by straining mightily to tear off his raincoat, which was dragging him downward, and swimming to solid ground. For weeks after that, we called him the Incredible Hulk.

No, the story about Father Cha throwing a lifeline to drowning folk isn't entirely off the mark. But there is a twist here. There is another dimension I've since glimpsed, or that has tumbled into my brain like a flash flood, particularly after hearing Dionisio's story about what really happened. It was in fact Dionisio who tried to save Father Cha from the rampaging water, he was in front, he took the brunt of the onrushing water logs. Alas, he was hit badly and lost consciousness: it was no small miracle he himself survived. He still doesn't how he did.

But his experience drove home to me that the rope-throwing isn't exactly a one-way street. It isn't just Bishop Labayen and his priests who have thrown a lifeline to drowning folk, it is the folk of Quezon who have thrown a lifeline at a drowning Church.

In the end, that is what the Church of the Poor really means. It is a reaffirmation of something deeply vital that has been forgotten over the centuries of religious life in this country. Which is that the Church is not the clergy or the Church officials who materialize from palaces on grand occasions in grand clothing; it is the folk themselves, often a little patronizingly treated, and not just called, a flock. It is the people who constitute the Church, as bone and blood and sinew constitute a body, and thought and feeling and ecstasy constitute the soul.

Bishop Labayen might have been the chief architect of the Church of the Poor in Infanta but he had no small amount of help from everyone, not just the priests who took the journey with him on the rock-strewn road that wound around the mountains. All of them raised that Church, and all of them have kept that Church on its feet. Despite the lash of wind and rain, despite the yoke of hunger and martial law, despite the whims of God and government. A true Church beats in the heart of the storm- and greed-ravaged land, one that shows how faith can truly move mountains.

Government in fact is that too, or should be. It isn't the public officials who strut around while saying blindly the loggers are not to blame for the deaths in Quezon; it is the folk who seethe through their tears that well up in their eyes at seeing their children buried in the mud. Government is the people.

But the one that's there right now, you think of another kind of rope to throw to it. The one that tightens round the neck.

Praying for FPJ

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS this column was being written, news reports say that defeated presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. had been rushed to St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City at around 2 a.m. yesterday, following a massive stroke. Hospital sources say that the doctors are doing everything for the opposition leader, but at this point he needs prayers badly.

The news of FPJ's sudden illness has stunned the nation, and citizens have crossed political lines to pray for him. Doubtless their thoughts go back to some four months ago when he filed his protest against his rival Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Now nothing is more important to him and his family than that thin thread of dear life. Moreover, there's the thought that had FPJ won last May, his current condition would have made Vice President Noli de Castro president. On both counts, it's a sobering thought. I join the nation in praying for FPJ.

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As a result of the recent massive floodings in Aurora, Quezon and part of Nueva Ecija and Bulacan, the media have focused on the logging activities in those provinces. But reports indicate that wanton logging is rampant in other provinces. For instance, there are reports that the jungles of Basilan—once so thick that Abu Sayyaf bandits could escape the military dragnet by simply disappearing into them—are being ravaged. Reports say logging activities are being traced to a prominent local official who is said to have distributed 26 chainsaws to tribal folks.

This seems to be the picture in many other places and the government really has to crack down on these activities before it's too late. But the citizenry has to be involved in this effort.

* * *

Last night Cecile Alvarez and I had as guest in our regular dzRH show Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. We queried him about the reports on the pernicious use of chainsaws. He said that under the Chainsaw Act passed in the 11th Congress, the use of chainsaws is regulated precisely because they could cut down century-old trees within minutes. Gonzalez stressed that under the law the chainsaws have to be registered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which has to monitor their use. But apparently that law is being violated with impunity. For instance, in the Quezon-Aurora area, there are reportedly some 400 chainsaws operating, many of them distributed by unscrupulous businessmen to natives from whom the former buy the hot logs.

* * *

Gonzalez stressed that the key to curbing illegal logging is strict monitoring and prosecution of the guilty, and the Department of Justice is under orders from the President to do so, in coordination with other agencies of government. He narrated that a few days ago the authorities seized two trucks full of glitches, and the DOJ quickly filed the appropriate cases before the Cavite regional trial court.

Such aggressive moves are good as they should sow some fear in the hearts of violators; for from the way things look, it seems no one fears the law anymore. But let's hope the government is not doing a *ningas cogon* this time in its anti-illegal logging campaign and that it will not cave in to political pressures as it did in the past.

* * *

Secretary Gonzalez lamented that some of those with legal timber licenses do not operate in their concession areas and prefer to buy hot logs from illegal loggers. But he said that just as pernicious are the activities of the slash-and-burn people (*mag-uuling*) and the *kaingeros*, for they swoop down on newly reforested trees. Gonzalez also pointed out that the Forestry Act, enacted by Marcos through PD 705 in 1974, hasn't been amended since, although many conditions have changed. For instance, the increasing aggressiveness of the illegal loggers ought to merit stiffer penalties. The way things are, he said, the penalties against cutting coconut trees are far more serious than cutting century-old trees. No wonder so many are logging with impunity!

* * *

For us citizens who are used to Congress' propensity to investigate anything under the sun, it's truly disturbing that PD 705 hasn't been amended in the past 30 years. But what else is new? I recall that former Sen. Leticia Shahani pointed out, in a front-page article in this paper some months back, how Congress still has to define once and for all our archipelagic boundaries, long after the close of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, which mandated the definition.

The failure of Congress to amend PD 705 may have contributed to the wiping out of a large part of our forest cover, while the failure to define our national territory could get us into an unnecessary war in the region.

There must be other proposed bills that need to be passed or laws that need to be amended, but they're not acted on, perhaps because they will not be as high-profile and sensational as the investigations. Clearly, Congress should spend less time investigating and more time legislating badly needed laws.

* * *

I read the statements of Sen. Edgardo Angara denying his family's involvement in illegal logging. I have no doubt that his family is not directly involved in the destruction of forests in their province of Aurora. But when one considers the magnitude of the recent calamity there, one cannot but conclude that the Angaras, who control the politics there, preferred to look the other way while their friends, who conveniently know how to drop their names, carried on with their logging activities. It just doesn't wash that while the Angaras have benefited from the politics there, they cannot be held responsible in part for the miseries caused by a wanton depredation of nature's resources. It's time politicians are held responsible for what happens in their territory.

The great Bernad

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

"MINDANAO is a large island, but this fact is not always remembered (or perhaps it was not known) by those who plan its development. Nor is this fact always remembered by journalists. It is rather amusing to see news reports that state, 'There was a fire in Mindanao last night,' as though Mindanao were but a tiny island."

That is how the author of a new book, "The Great Island, Studies in the Exploration and Evangelization of Mindanao," (Ateneo de Manila University Press) begins his preface. It is a line that has been said countless times; perhaps, to end up most of the time on the deaf ears of Manila. Except that this time, it is being said by Fr. Miguel A. Bernad of the Society of Jesus. And for that to be said by Father Bernad—who minces no words in his writings yet is able to say it succinctly in so few words (the Bernad style I call it)—is something.

For Father Bernad is not just a native son of Mindanao. He is in fact one of its most brilliant sons. Fr. Asandas Balchand, his superior in the Jesuit community at Loyola House in Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan—where Father Bernad has been working quietly for the past 26 years—refers to him as "one of the most highly accomplished Jesuits in the Philippine Province."

It is from that "quiet" outpost that Father Bernad has been churning out books and essays on Philippine history and literature, including a weekly column in a national daily. At 87 and at a time when many university journals are good only for the trash bins, he continues to single-handedly edit the "Kinaadman"—he calls it "a journal of the Southern Philippines"—one of the most reputed journals of scholarly learning in the Philippines today, whose readership extends abroad. Few perhaps remember that it was also Father Bernad who once edited Ateneo de Manila's top-notch "Philippine Studies" journal way back in 1954-1959.

To say that Father Bernad is a prolific writer is to miss the point. It is the Bernad prose that makes the man distinct and has created for him a wide following in Filipino literature circles, which he had once described as "inchoate" (no longer so today; he once intimated to Mindanao writer Christine Godinez-Ortega).

But more than the Bernad prose and the meticulous predilection for detail in his historiography is the great mind that lies behind the man. The Bernad writing has found its usefulness not just among literature teachers, students and writers, but also among historians and anthropologists, and among those who care to know about the cultural humdrums and goings-on in Filipino sociocultural life. I remember his scathing remarks against the perceived persecution by the Arroyo government of Acsa Ramirez who had spilled the beans on corruption in a government agency. Father Bernad's words said in so few lines what others had probably wanted to say.

The rare combination of history and literature has made Father Bernad one of the most sought-after lecturers in public forums held in different parts of the Philippines. And so it was to one such forum that my colleagues and I went to a few days ago. We had been mistakenly told that the lecture would be on the teaching of history. But arriving at the venue, we saw the streamer announcing it was a lecture on "Dante's Cosmic Journey." For many of us, we had forgotten our Dante and were, in fact, the least interested in it. But we were already there and there was no turning back. Two Bernad books will be launched anyway following the lecture, I said, and this was what I shall focus on.

I am no literary writer, but all I can say from my forgotten stock of college literature is that Father Bernad brought all of us in the audience to a journey that was indeed cosmic. His knowledge of Dante was sharp, very sharp, in fact. Aside from reciting entire lines from memory in impeccable Italian, he had interspersed Dante with social and theological realities. The audience was a wide mix of young and old, students, teachers (active and retired), and mixture of people and professionals from Iligan City and from the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, all of whom obviously were Father Bernad fans.

At the open forum, somebody asked about hell. "God does not bring us to hell. Hell is a choice that we make," Father Bernad answered. "In other words Father, there is no judgement?" to which he replied "In a way perhaps yes, but would you want to share your space in heaven with Adolf Hitler?"

At the end of the lecture, the entire audience in that heavily packed room, to a man, rose in thunderous ovation. It was the moment I loved. It was the honor I had wanted for this man whom I have long ago appointed as my own mentor. There was a time that when I write, I would always think that my readership was composed of nobody but Father Bernad. And that was a lot of readership!

* * *

A new journal of learning is now out of the press, inspired by Father Bernad's penchant to bring Mindanao to a level of scholarly interest. This is Capitol University's "MINDAyawan Journal of Culture and Society." Subscriptions are at P300 for one year for two copies coming out in March and October. Those interested to subscribe to this embryonic effort toward culture scholarship may write mindayawan@cu-cdo.edu.ph.

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Joke on 'consumer sovereignty'

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

I'D like to share in full the letter of a reader in the Visayas. Graham Reinders is apparently a European and has a written about maximizing garden growth (his website is http://www.growsupergardens.com/). His letter is very interesting and there is much that I agree with in what he's written.

"I read your Thursday's INQUIRER column on trade unionism and its spin-offs. Much of what you said is valid and contemporary thinking.

"You are a prolific writer and have acceptable opinions on a large range of subjects.

"I am going to make a quantum leap here and assume you are capable of thinking outside the box.

"Labor and management have an uneasy industrial relationship going back to 1790. If you have read Dickens you will have some idea of why things have developed to what they are.

"Trade unionism is no more and no less than the workers banding together in an attempt to check management's natural tendency to exploit them...

"The labor/management relationship has always been a pendulum. Both sides try to swing the pendulum in their own direction.

"The Elite and the Ruling class are culturally incapable of understanding labor or labor's desire to have more cake at the expense of the owner's profits. The ruling class tends to take the largest share of the cake as a 'Right.' History seems to verify this.

"Fortunately for labor, from time to time the supply-demand curve for labor's availability swings to the point where the capitalists have to pay exorbitant wages.

"Unfortunately for labor these times are short-lived and management takes its turn in keeping most of the cake.

"Words like, Communism, Socialism and all the other -isms are not to be confused with labor-management realities.

"Ever since McCarthy was seeing communists in all his cupboards, we have attached this derogatory term to all the workers with whom we do not agree. The flavor of these days is to call all enemies 'terrorists.'

"There are many 'communist groups' who have never heard of Stalin, let alone Trotsky, or Engels. I would go so far as to say that even Mao, who lived in their time, is unknown to them.

"It is, for obvious reasons, not understood by Capitalist Leaders, that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. For Every Bush there is a Bin Laden. Every leader of every organization on this planet has an alter ego, working directly against them.

"Some wear white hats and some wear black hats. Morality, Good, Evil, etc., depends only upon which hat 'our' particular leader is wearing.

"You are not old enough to have watched British Trade Unionism, which was the world's role model. It bloomed to highest relevance in the mid 1940s and declined with all its worldwide spin-offs, probably to disappear by about 2010.

"I will tell you something, which will define the future of all trade unionism in First World countries.

"The US blue-collar worker (bulk of trade union memberships) peaked at about 62 percent of the labor force in 1946. At this moment it stands at 8 percent. It will decline to 2 percent in the very near future. This defines the whole game and no more need be said. It is over.

"Less advanced countries have tried, more and less, successfully to hang on to their trade unionisms.

"You may well quote in your article, German labor, or any of the countries declining because of it. Unfortunately they and many others are caught in transition,

"Trade union and labor wage claims have absolutely nothing to do [with] the well-being of a population.

"The entire First World is in serious decline and the US Empire is actually over and just playing out its time. Labor wages are not the real problem, just the opposite.

"Henry Ford's necessity of having to pay his labor enough to buy his junk was the reality that allowed the US to become the greatest nation on earth and the whole First World to reach the standard of living which it did. Up until the 1980s, the affluent 'middle-class' probably encompassed about 50 percent of the First World's population.

"All this is over.

"China and India and Asia are de-facto uncontrolled sweat-shops, equal to Dickens' worst scenario. They will live through hell until they in turn create their own brand of trade unionism under their own leaders, who will be equally as brutal as the government leaders.

"All of us have missed the reality of the modern global world. All of us are still living off the savings that were accumulated while the 'middle class' reigned. No new money is being put into the hands of the masses.

"All Wal-Mart staff are on minimum wage which is relative poverty. The story is repeated in all modern franchises and mega-nationals. The money is being diverted directly upwards.

"You and I will pay the price. The little family business that put the children through university and bought a little house in the suburbs has been replaced by the large store that exploits its labor, who will never climb out of the hole.

"The joke on all of us is that the multinationals are doing it in the name of 'consumer sovereignty' so we can buy all their junk a peso cheaper. The real price we pay is a thousand times more, because we have sold our middle-class future, so as to be able to buy cheaper toys. The ruling class always remains at the top and is little affected by the changing players on the field.

"The Philippines is in an extremely vulnerable position. It will soon be cut loose by changing geopolitics, unfortunately before it ever weaned itself from the foreign-money teat."

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Safety of informants

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

IN TERMS of protecting their sources of information, Filipino journalists have an edge over their counterparts in the American press.

Last October, two American reporters were meted out a prison term of 18 months each by a judge for refusing to reveal the source of their news report. The case stemmed from the statements made by a former ambassador of the United States criticizing the policy of President George W. Bush on Iraq.

Several days later, a newspaper columnist disclosed that the ambassador's wife was a covert operative of the Central Intelligence Agency, implying that the wife (whose name was mentioned) may have given him information that she gathered in the course of her official duties.

To ensure the safety of intelligence personnel, American law strictly prohibits, under pain of severe penalties, the disclosure of their identity. The ban applies even if they are no longer in the service.

Acting on a tip given by an unnamed source, the reporters wrote that the information about the ambassador's wife was leaked by a member of the Bush administration to the columnist supposedly to get back at the ambassador for his critical remarks.

Invoking national security considerations, the US justice department conducted an investigation into the alleged leak. It was able to convince a court to issue a subpoena to the reporters, ordering them to testify before a grand jury and reveal the source of their information.

They refused. The prospect of going to jail for disobeying the court order did not scare them. They preferred imprisonment rather than betray the trust of their news source.

Appeal

The refusal resulted in a prison term of 18 months. Surprisingly, nothing was done with the columnist who wrote about the ambassador's wife. No action was taken by the authorities to prosecute him for violating the law prohibiting the unauthorized disclosure of information about intelligence operatives.

As expected, the American media strongly protested the court's decision; they described it as a serious assault on press freedom. They called for legislation that will prevent the forced disclosure of the identities of informants or newspaper "whistle blowers." The sentence has been held in abeyance pending its review by a higher court.

Until I read about this case, I didn't realize that the American press was beset with a problem that had already been addressed in our country some 58 years ago.

In 1946, our Congress enacted a law that protected the confidentiality of news sources. Under Republic Act 53 (also known as the "Sotto Law," in honor of its author, Sen. Vicente Sotto), the publisher, editor, columnist or reporter of a newspaper, magazine or periodical of general circulation cannot be compelled to reveal the source of any information or news report appearing in that publication that was disclosed to them in confidence.

Initially, the exception to the non-disclosure rule was if "the court or a committee of Congress finds that such revelation is demanded by the interest of the State."

Amendment

The definition of the phrase "interest of the State" was put to a test in 1948 when a newspaper reporter wrote about a leakage in the bar examinations for that year. After ruling that maintaining the integrity of those tests is covered by that phrase, the Supreme Court ordered the reporter to reveal the name of his informant who was allegedly a court insider.

The reporter refused. His refusal prompted the tribunal to hold him in contempt and order his punishment.

Senator Sotto disagreed with the tribunal's decision. He argued that the phrase in question was intended to have a more restricted meaning. Rather than tangle with the justices, Sotto worked for the amendment of the law to change the controversial phrase to "security of the State." With the amendment, the reporter got off the hook.

So, as things stand at present, the only instance when a newspaper staff member can be ordered to reveal the identity of his informant is when it is demanded by the security of the State, as determined by a court or a committee of Congress.

In 1999, a member of a committee of the House of Representatives sought to compel a newspaper reporter to disclose the name of the person who supplied her the information in her news report that some congressmen received bribes in consideration for stopping the investigation that was being conducted on certain telecommunications companies.

He backtracked from his demand after his colleagues convinced him that he cannot invoke the "security of the State" provision of the law to squeeze out the information he wanted from the reporter.

Other media

There is an element of irony about the lack of a similar "non-disclosure" law in the United States. The provisions of our Constitution on freedom of the press and of speech were adopted from the United States. Our tribunal often cites decisions of the US Supreme Court on press freedom in the resolution of similar issues here.

This is probably one time when the American press can learn a thing or two from their brethren in the Philippines on how to go about protecting the confidentiality of their informants.

Incidentally, if you look closely, the protection granted by the Sotto Law is limited to newspapers, magazines and other periodicals, or what is collectively described as print media. It does not cover radio and television entities that are similarly engaged in the business of providing news and information to the public.

There have been efforts in the past by the broadcast media to have the law amended so they will come under its protective umbrella. So far, they have not been successful.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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A decision too late and not enough

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to suspend all logging activities in the country and the challenge of the Multi-Sectoral Action Group (MSAG) to cancel the permits of at least nine logging companies in Aurora and Quezon rather came too late. Due to the lack of foresight of government officials (they are blinded by "other concerns and interests"), hundreds of people have died in the two provinces; even as thousands or even millions continue to suffer from the tragic effects of the recent floods, landslides and mudflows.

Logging was allowed on the premise that those given logging permits will take responsibility for the reforestation of the logged-over areas in their concessions. However, they failed to do this. While profiting immensely from the exploitation of our forests, logging companies do not bother to restore them. And only after the dire effects of illegal and irresponsible logging are felt in tragic disasters does the government again remember to enforce the rules on reforestation.

Making matters worse, the government funds reforestation projects mostly with foreign borrowings, thus adding to our foreign debt. And so, as logging companies get richer by denuding our forests, our poor country sinks deeper into debt due to reforestation.

It is not enough to just impose a total log ban now. Someone must pay for the rape of our forests, which has caused untold sufferings for our country and people. The government must implement rules that would compel logging companies to restore what they have destroyed. People in the government must think in terms of the long-term effects of its decisions and policies. We just hope that the people in government and logging companies are not one and the same.

—NICLOLE S. BAUTISTA,
22 Garnet Ext.,
Doña Juana Subd.
Maybunga, Pasig City

Inadequate law on sin taxes

I SINCERELY appreciate the authors of the open letter (PDI, 12/6/04) regarding Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's proposed law on the "sin taxes." By coming out with a full-page advertisement, the signatories—considered to be among the country's who's who in public finance—have once again shown their willingness to lend their time, talent and resources for the benefit of the government and our people even if they are no longer in public service.

I, too, am convinced of the superiority of the Enrile Bill (Senate Bill No. 1815). But what I don't understand—and this was not explained in the open letter—is why we have to wait for a six-year period for the various tax rates to be converged into a single tax rate. Many agree with what the authors of the open letter said that we have the most complicated tax system for cigarettes in the world, a system that has only benefited the manufacturers of cigarettes. But if we need to simplify our excise tax system on cigarettes and increase the revenues now because of our fiscal condition, why wait for 2010?

Between now and 2010, many things can happen in and outside Congress that could put to naught this bright idea of a single tax rate in the Enrile bill. If our UP economic professors are to be believed, we may already be like Argentina long before 2010.

Moreover, the uniform tax rate is supposedly also meant to make us WTO compliant. But just like its counterpart in the House (HB 3174), the Enrile bill would largely retain the existing tax regime introduced by RA 8240, which is discriminatory. It seeks to protect locally produced cigarettes against imported ones by classifying the latter as "new brands" and subjecting them to the highest tax applicable—up to 2010. Before the eyes of the World Trade Organization, this is discriminatory as it violates GATT Article III:2. Unless we immediately shift to a uniform rate, we would be open to challenges from any WTO member up to 2010.

The Enrile bill may be superior but it does not provide enough.

—AARON C. REDUBLA,
11 Kalaw-Ledesma Circle,
Tierra Verde, Quezon City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Barefaced injustice

THE SILENCE of Malacañang and the Department of Foreign Affairs on the acquittal of the three Kuwaiti cops accused of gang-raping an 18-year-old Filipina overseas worker is deafening. Though the Kuwaiti appeals court convicted the policemen for sodomy, it disregarded the crime of rape, thus allowing the accused to escape with lighter sentences. Sharia Law prescribes death for rapists, especially if they are persons in authority.

For a government that is largely dependent on overseas Filipinos to keep the economy afloat, this mockery of internationally accepted standards of justice adds insult to injury. This must not go unnoticed and unaddressed. For it could set a dangerous precedent and jeopardize the lives and security of the 47,000 overseas Pinay workers in Kuwait. The silence of the Arroyo administration could encourage more incidents of gang rape and sexual abuse against Filipinas in Kuwait and other nations.

The least that the Arroyo administration should do is file a strong diplomatic protest.

All the chapters and members of the Migrante Sectoral Party condemn this barefaced injustice.

—CONNIE BRAGAS-REGALADO,
chair, Migrante Sectoral Party,
115-B Kamuning Rd.,
Quezon City

Mining good for the country

THE RECENT Supreme Court ruling on mining could yet be one of its most important decisions.

The Philippines has one of the highest levels of poverty in Asia, with some 58 percent of its people admitting they are poor. A disturbingly high 34 percent are officially listed as poverty-stricken. A great bulk of these people live in the provinces, so far away from any help that could uplift their lives.

But there is a savior, and the Supreme Court has recognized it—mining.

Mining brings vast wealth and economic progress to a nation—look at Australia. It can do as much for the Philippines now that the Supreme Court has allowed foreigners to help develop this rich resource.

Those previously opposed to mining must now accept the fact that a starving child is a greater concern than a temporary, limited damage to the environment.

The key in mining these days is to do it in a responsible fashion, with minimal harm to the environment so that the land is restored once the mining operation is finished. Mining provides local people with jobs and other income-producing activities. It also generates more resources for community development.

It is not mining itself but mining done irresponsibly which is the problem. We need to ensure that mining companies operate with the welfare of the community in mind.

Too often in the past, well-meaning people stopped or disrupted mining operations without fully weighing the benefits of mining against its disadvantages.

I appeal to the mayors and governors: act in the national interest. I've heard too many stories of local officials making it difficult, if not impossible, to operate a mine.

Congress has spoken, the administration has reinforced it, the Supreme Court has agreed: mining is good for the country. It's time to raise the poor out of the morass they've sank into.

—PETER WALLACE,
president,
The Wallace Business Forum,
14/F Sagittarius Bldg.,
HV dela Costa St.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City

Road project has popular support

PLEASE allow us to comment on the article titled "Tillers warn of another Luisita in Batangas," (PDI, 11/28/04) bylined by Norman Bordadora. The road project referred to in the article has been a priority infrastructure project of the national government since the 1980s, as part of the Nasugbu-Ternate Tourism Road. In implementing the project with national government funds, we have scrupulously followed Department of Public Works and Highways guidelines and procedures, including on matters relating to right of way. And we have adopted a design that minimizes the impact on the environment.

The project is envisioned to provide a vital link between Metro Manila and the western portions of Cavite and Batangas (which suffer from poor road access); spur agro-industrial and eco-tourism growth in these areas; and enhance the delivery of public services to thousands of people who have limited access to such services as health care and electric power. It bears noting that the overwhelming number of local residents, aware of the enormous benefits the project will bring into their lives, not only welcome the project but have, in fact, been clamoring for it.

Only 500 meters of the 2.8-kilometer road section remain to be completed. As a matter of policy and as with all the public works projects it undertakes, before proceeding with the project, the Regional Office IV-A of the DPWH met with community leaders, mass-based organizations and local officials in the spirit of transparency and fairness to get the consensus and the broad, strong grass-roots support of the stakeholders.

—BONIFACIO SEGUIT,
regional director,
Department of Public Works and Highways-IV A

Ray of hope

CORRUPTION, hold-ups, etc., even cell-phone snatching. So much bad news hogging the headlines. We cannot blame people if they become cynical and pessimistic about our country going nowhere but to the dogs.

However, there is a saying: "When there's life, there's hope." I have just seen "a ray of hope." After a day's work, I decided to visit a cousin. I parked my car in front of his house in Abellana Street, Guadalupe, Cebu City. When I went inside the house, I realized that my expensive cellular phone was gone. I immediately went back outside to look for it, praying for God's help.

As I was looking around, a young pedicab driver approached me and asked if I was looking for something. When I told him I was looking for my cellular phone, he told me that he had found it and handed it back to me without asking for anything in return. The name of the pedicab driver is Glicerio Ybañez of Abellana Street, Guadalupe. He earns only a few pesos a day. He could have bought many things with his "luck." But he chose to be honest.

My congratulations to Barangay Guadalupe and its chair Eugenio Faelnar. That community is certainly blessed for having an honest man in its ranks. I hope Glicerio will be honored for his honest act in the barangay's forthcoming fiesta activities. Such a gesture will not only give him a lasting remembrance of his good deed; it will also inspire other young people to emulate his honesty.

—JON PAUL DE PAULA,
jonpauldepaula@yahoo.com

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TACLOBAN	5J-658	DAILY	DC9	1530	1640
ILOILO	5J-458	M/W/F/Su	DC9	1440	1540
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4. Keep Christmas lights untangled to prevent short circuits.
5. Don't overload on Christmas lights to prevent fires.
6. Don't plug all your Christmas lights in one socket. Use multiple outlets.
7. Keep flammable objects away from your Christmas lights. All incandescent light sources, no matter how small they are, produce heat and may cause fire.
8. Make sure all the bulbs in your Christmas lights are working. A defective bulb can affect the performance of your Christmas lights.
9. For lights and decors outside your homes and offices, use only those designated for outdoor use.
10. Unplug Christmas lights before replacing a bulb to prevent electrocution.
11. Use bulbs of lower wattage for your Christmas light fixtures so you can save on your electric bill.
12. It is not the number of Christmas lights you have on that make for a bright Christmas. It's the light in our hearts that glows the brightest.

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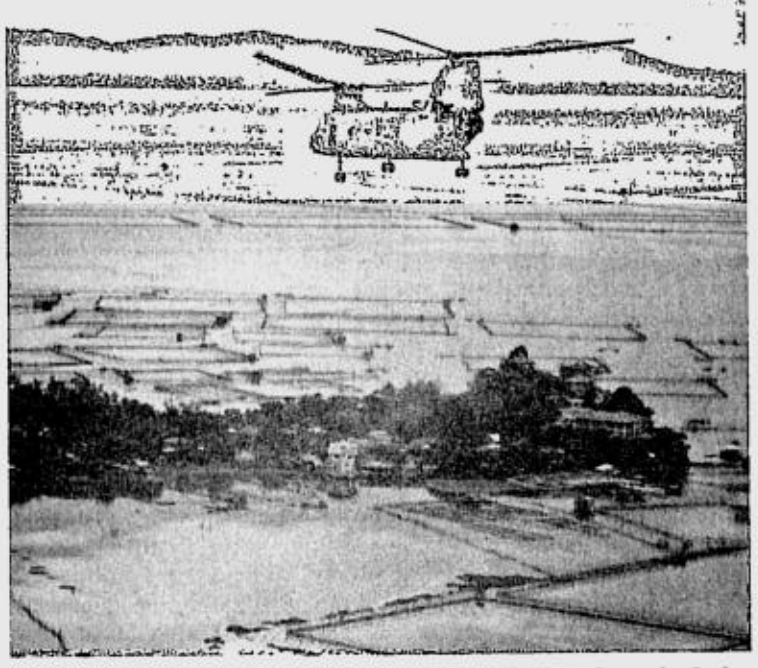
RP, US troops start relief missions



A US MARINE CH-46 Sea Knight transport helicopter from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force based in Okinawa, Japan, hovers above Laguna Lake as they ferry relief goods to typhoon-stricken Quezon on Saturday. AP

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—At least 400 Filipino and American troops launched the relief missions to landslide and flood victims in Real and Infanta in Quezon and in Dingalan, Aurora, from this former United States military base on Sunday.

Col. Gilbert Llanto, co-commander of the Base Disaster Response Coordinating Committee, said the mission involved 100 Philippine Air Force personnel from six commands based in Clark and 300 members of the US Marines Third Expeditionary Forces based in Okinawa, Japan.

Six CH-53 and two CH-56 helicopters began delivering the goods to the typhoon-battered towns on Sunday morning, Llanto said.

The cargoes, he said, comprised food and other items gathered by government agencies and nongovernment groups.

Maj. Gen. Charles Hotchkiss, PAF's 600th Air Base Wing commander, said a C-130 plane from the US military continued to bring in between 500 and 600 troops for the humanitarian missions.

The entire operation, which will end Dec. 16, took base at the Haribon complex, south of Clark's Diosdado Macapagal International Airport.

Capt. Dennis Williams of the US Embassy's public information section said the US military was helping on the request of the Philippine government.

Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal has dismissed as "baseless paranoia" the fear of Sen. Francis Pangilinan that New People's Army rebels would attack US troops helping in the rehabilitation of typhoon-ravaged provinces.

"I'm afraid Senator Pangilinan has become a victim of his own government stupidity. He is now being haunted by the ghost created by Malacañang and the military," Rosal said in a phone interview.

He also assured Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. that formal declaration of ceasefire is no longer necessary to ensure the peaceful delivery of relief goods to the calamity victims.

He said government soldiers involved in relief work in remote north Quezon areas were never harassed nor intimidated by Red fighters in the area. "It is important for those soldiers to stick to relief operations," Rosal advised.

Magsaysay had suggested a formal ceasefire between NPA and government troops while the rehabilitation of the ravaged areas was ongoing.

Pangilinan earlier raised a concern for American troops after the military reported last week that NPA guerrillas attacked government soldiers in Pasong Callos in San Rafael, Bulacan while conducting rescue and relief mission.

At least 10 soldiers were killed, according to the military. Rosal claimed that the slain soldiers were not involved in a rescue and relief operation when attacked but actually doing a military offensive against the rebels.

Rosal assured Pangilinan that the NPA would not launch tactical offensives against US soldiers, "as long as these foreign troops stay away from the territorial jurisdiction of the revolutionary government."

Quezon bore the brunt of landslides and flash floods, leaving more than a thousand dead and missing. About 168,000 residents were also rendered homeless.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Gov't soldiers give relief goods, medicine to NPA rebels, too

LUCENA CITY—Bullets fly and waste human lives during encounter between government troops and their enemies, the New People's Army.

But the recent calamity has temporarily rested the barrel of the gun and broke down the barriers between conflicting ideologies after government soldiers also provided food and medicine to their enemy.

Maj. Jose Broso, commander of the Army's 2nd Civil Relations Group-Civil Relation Service based in Camp Nakar, said they received reports from soldiers involved in the distribution of relief goods in the calamity stricken areas of north Quezon that suspected NPA rebels, most of them women, have also queued in several evacuation centers and received relief goods from the government during the initial days of the calamity.

Broso said the soldiers admit ted that they were surprised when they first saw the "rebels" but eventually consented because of compassion.

"The NPA were unarmed, wet and shivering from cold. A pitiful picture of lost and hungry platoon," Broso quoted the soldier in describing the look of their enemies.

He said the NPA guerillas, were positively identified by combatant soldiers through files, military informers and personal encounters.

When contacted, communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal downplayed the incidents.

"It's possible that our NPA unit in the area were also victims of the calamities."

"But lining up for relief goods and medicines, that is one risk they would not surely take. Guni-guni lang yun ng militar sa NPA," Rosal said in a phone interview.

An Army soldier from another unit, who also had an encounter with NPA rebels while soliciting relief goods in an evacuation center in General Nakar, narrated his own experience: "The NPA was in a group of five—four women and a teenage boy, all unarmed. They immediately changed their wet clothes with dry ones after receiving clothes from the local social welfare officer. They also feasted on cookies and gulped down several cups of hot native coffee."

"When our eyes met, they knew that I recognized them, at least the two of them. My instinct was to grab my gun and accosted them. But I was taken aback when I noticed the strange looks in their eyes. Gone was the usual menacing gaze but instead pitiful and pathetic," recalled the soldier who requested anonymity fearful that his superior would reprimand him.

The soldier said he decided to just watch the group from a distance without informing other government troops who were also present in the evacuation center.

"I could sense that they were really hungry, maybe sick because the two of them immediately took medicine," he said.

After receiving the relief goods rations consisting of rice, sardines, noodles, sugar and coffee, the soldier said the rebels casually walked away.

"One of them nodded at me as if expressing their gratitude. I returned the gesture with a hand signal of farewell," the soldier said.

In other incidents, the military also provided medicine to the distressed and sick NPA rebels.

Lt. Col. Jocelyn Pancrudo-Turla, commanding officer of Camp Nakar Station Hospital in the Army's Southern Luzon Command said her medical team had also encountered suspected NPA rebels.

"An all women group arrived in the military emergency hospital in Gen. Nakar. They were different from the rest of the patients who would always first ask us what medicine to take. They have with them a list of assorted medicine, mostly analgesic and antibiotics. They knew what they needed," Turla recalled.

She said that when they asked the three women to just bring in their sick patients in the hospital, they were told that their visitors came from remote areas. After thanking the military medical team for the medicines, the group hurriedly left. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Former Laguna mayor shot dead

TWO motorcycle-riding hitmen shot dead the controversial former mayor of Mabitac, Laguna in Pililla, Rizal Saturday morning.

Pililla police officer in charge Senior Insp. Ricardo Morada said Felix Carpio, 69, who was with his 12-year-old son Antonio was at the Shell Gas Station at Barangay Hulo, Pililla at about 6:30 a.m. for refueling when two motorcycling men shot the former several times. They left his son unhurt.

Investigation showed that the Carpios, who were residing at J. Burgos St. in Tanay, Rizal and were on their way to visit their home in Mabitac.

The suspects fled towards Tanay after the incident, according to witnesses. Police said, they are still investigating further on the incident.

Carpio was among primary suspects in the killing of a top police officer in Mabitac several years ago. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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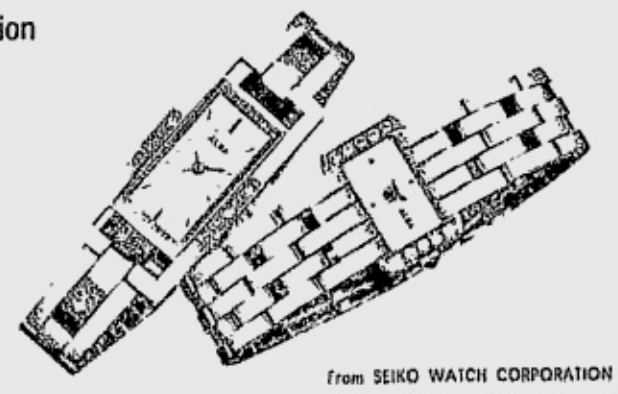


from SEIKO WATCH CORPORATION

Groups hail, hit SC ruling on mining agreements

ENVIRONMENTAL groups opposed and hailed the Supreme Court ruling allowing the government to enter into financial and technical assistance agreements with foreign companies.

One group, the Legal Rights and Natural Resource Center (LRC), likened the high court's Dec. 1 ruling to the storms that wrecked Luzon.

The decision will "create long term damage to the country's natural resources and drive communities deeper into poverty," said Ruel Paculba of the LRC.

"The sell-out of our country's resources is upheld by the highest court of the land," read a statement by LRC, one of the nongovernment groups that gave legal assistance for petitioners against the Mining Act of 1995.

Reversal

The ruling reverses the court's January decision in the La Bugal mining case, declaring that the Mining Act and the Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) entered into by the government and Western Mining Corp. was unconstitutional.

Five justices who voted in favor of declaring the Mining Act, its implementing rules and regulations and the FTAA of Western Mining Corp. as unconstitutional last January has voted to uphold their legality in the Dec. 1, 2004 ruling.

Paculba said the Dec. 1 decision is causing outrage from different communities hosting mining operations or are identified as potential hosts, most especially the indigenous tribes.

Large-scale mining operations strip large areas of vegetation, dislocate peoples, endanger the country's rich biodiversity and sources of potable water, explained Paculba.

Development

In General Santos City, a pro-mining group hailed the high court decision, claiming it would pave the way for the development of rural areas hosting mining operations.

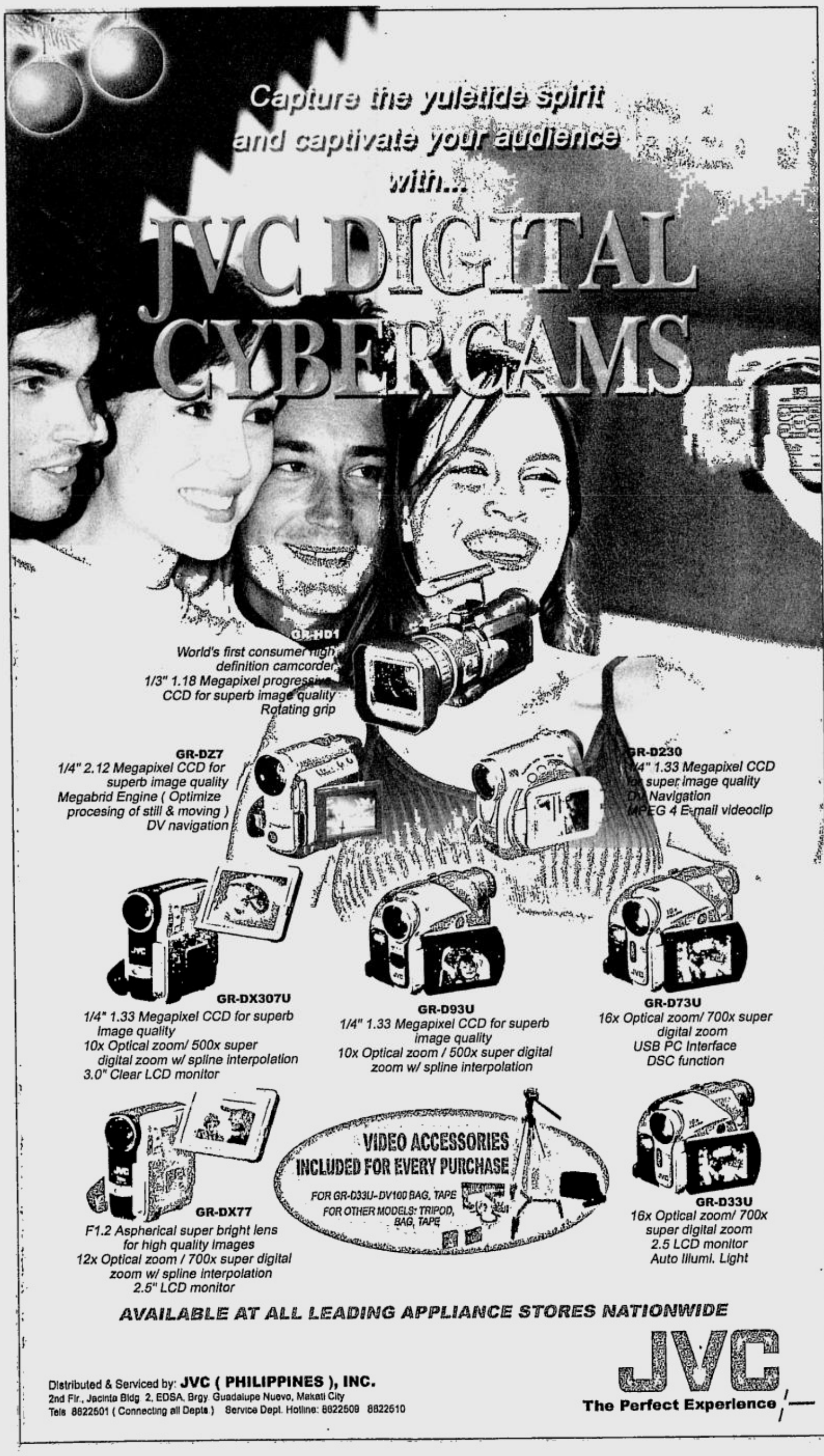
In a statement, the Socsksargen Multi-Sectoral Coalition for Sustainable Mineral Development said "The case dragged for eight long years in the Supreme Court. Several projects that could have generated thousands of employment and billions of revenues were put on hold, particularly the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project, considered one of the biggest mining ventures in the country."

New investments

In the same statement signed by coalition chair Dr. Angelo Ladub of the Kalasag Development Initiatives Inc., co-chair Carlito Uy of the South Cotabato Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Director Ninfa Estabillo of the South Cotabato Communicators Network, the group said the high court's verdict would help attract new investments, create new jobs and alleviate poverty in rural areas.

The group asked other sectors to support the full implementation of the 1995 Mining Act for sustainable mineral development.

It also urged the Sagittarius Mines, the company that took over the operation of the Tampakan mining project, to continue fulfilling its commitment in providing development assistance to the area's five tribal communities and local governments hosting the project. *Ryan D. Rosauro and Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



Exec insists he's legitimate head of environment body

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The former executive director of an environmental body in Palawan has clarified that he has not been replaced despite a resolution of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) declaring his position vacant last Aug. 13.

Winston Arzaga, reacting to a story published Nov. 19 on page 19 of the INQUIRER, said he was still the legally mandated executive director of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS).

Arzaga has challenged the appointment of Nelson Devanadera invoking a previous ruling of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) that confirmed his appointment as permanent.

Devanadera, on the other hand, enjoyed an endorsement from President Macapagal-Arroyo and the PCSD, a policy-making council that decides on sustainable development issues in Palawan of which the PCSDS is the implementing agency.

In his letter, Arzaga said "the supposed endorsement by President Arroyo of Devanadera as executive director is contained in a xeroxed copy brought by Secretary Vince Perez to the PCSD, which served as basis to declare the position of executive director vacant."

He added that when he verified the existence of the letter, the Malacañang Records Office couldn't find any.

"As of this date, there is also no record to show that such a letter was officially transmitted to PCSD," he said.

In his letter, Arzaga said the Court of Appeals 13th Division promulgated a resolution containing an order restraining the council from implementing the resolution declaring the executive director position vacant. The order was served and received by the parties, who are members of the council, on Nov. 15 and 16.

The temporary restraining order, Arzaga said, was very specific as it enjoins PCSD Chair Rep. Abraham Mitra and the members of the Council not to implement the resolution.

Mitra was quoted in the INQUIRER story as saying that "there is nothing to be restrained because the act had already been consummated."

According to him, the choice of executive director still vests with the President because it is under the Office of the President and with the PCSD because he/she has to enjoy the trust and confidence of its members.

Mitra added that the law that created PCSD does not say that the executive director must be permanent.

But Arzaga said that although the PCSDS is under the Office of the President, its 97-man staff including the executive director is governed by Civil Service Rules and Laws as provided for by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 7611, the law that created PCSDS.

He also clarified that aside from being a qualified permanent executive director under CSC Rules, he finished the Masters in Public Management from the Ateneo School of Government and did a special graduate work at the University of Asia and the Pacific. *Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cory lends miraculous rosary to Poe

From page A1

fought presidential election in May, said she hoped the movie actor would get well in time for Christmas.

In a statement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "The President joins the nation in praying for Mr. Poe's swift and complete recovery, and wishes him well. She hopes that he will be discharged from the hospital soon so that he can enjoy the holiday season with his loved ones."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the man widely blamed for Poe's defeat in the last elections, yesterday wished the actor a quick and full recovery despite a post-election spat that further drove a wedge between them.

"I am thankful that Mr. Poe is responding to medication and I join the nation in praying for his speedy recovery," Lacson said in a statement.

Water under the bridge

Lacson told the INQUIRER the last time he and Poe talked was at the tail end of the campaign period when both their camps were hoping they could get together to form a united opposition against Ms Arroyo.

"We may have had some love lost (during the last elections) but it doesn't matter now," the senator said. "That's water under the bridge."

When another losing presidential candidate, Raul Roco, learned that Poe had suffered a stroke, he said: "Let's hope for the best and ask for prayers. Prayer works."

The former senator and education secretary is himself battling a recurrence of prostate cancer.

"I regularly see my doctor [in Manila]. You have to monitor yourself. I'm well," he said. Now, he said, he weighs 176 lb, six pounds over his ideal weight, and has a normal blood pressure of 128/72.

Prayers for Poe

Another former presidential candidate who visited Poe in the hospital yesterday was evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva.

Villanueva said he whispered to the unconscious Poe to seek the blessing of God.

The Jesus is Lord Ministry founder prayed with friends and relatives of Poe "for God to give Ronnie a second chance in life."

Senate President Franklin Drilon also wished Poe a speedy recovery. "We offer our prayers to him," he said.

Congressional allies of the President, including her son, yesterday expressed similar wishes.

Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo (Lakas, Pampanga), eldest son of Ms Arroyo who is also an actor, said he would "sponsor daily Masses and offer special intentions" for the recovery of Poe.

Representatives Antonio Cuenco (Lakas, Cebu City) and Eduardo Gullas (Alayon, Cebu) said they and the people of Cebu are joining in the prayers for Poe.

It was Cebu that gave Ms Arroyo a margin of more than one million votes over Poe, turning the tide of the May 10 presidential election.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said, "We are saddened by this turn of events. The best thing for us to do is to continue praying for his quick and total recovery."

Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) said that Poe "still has a large role to play in helping unify the nation in the aftermath of the last May polls."

The head of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, also enjoined all Filipinos to pray for the recovery of the country's legendary actor. *With reports from Carlito Pablo, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Blanche Rivera; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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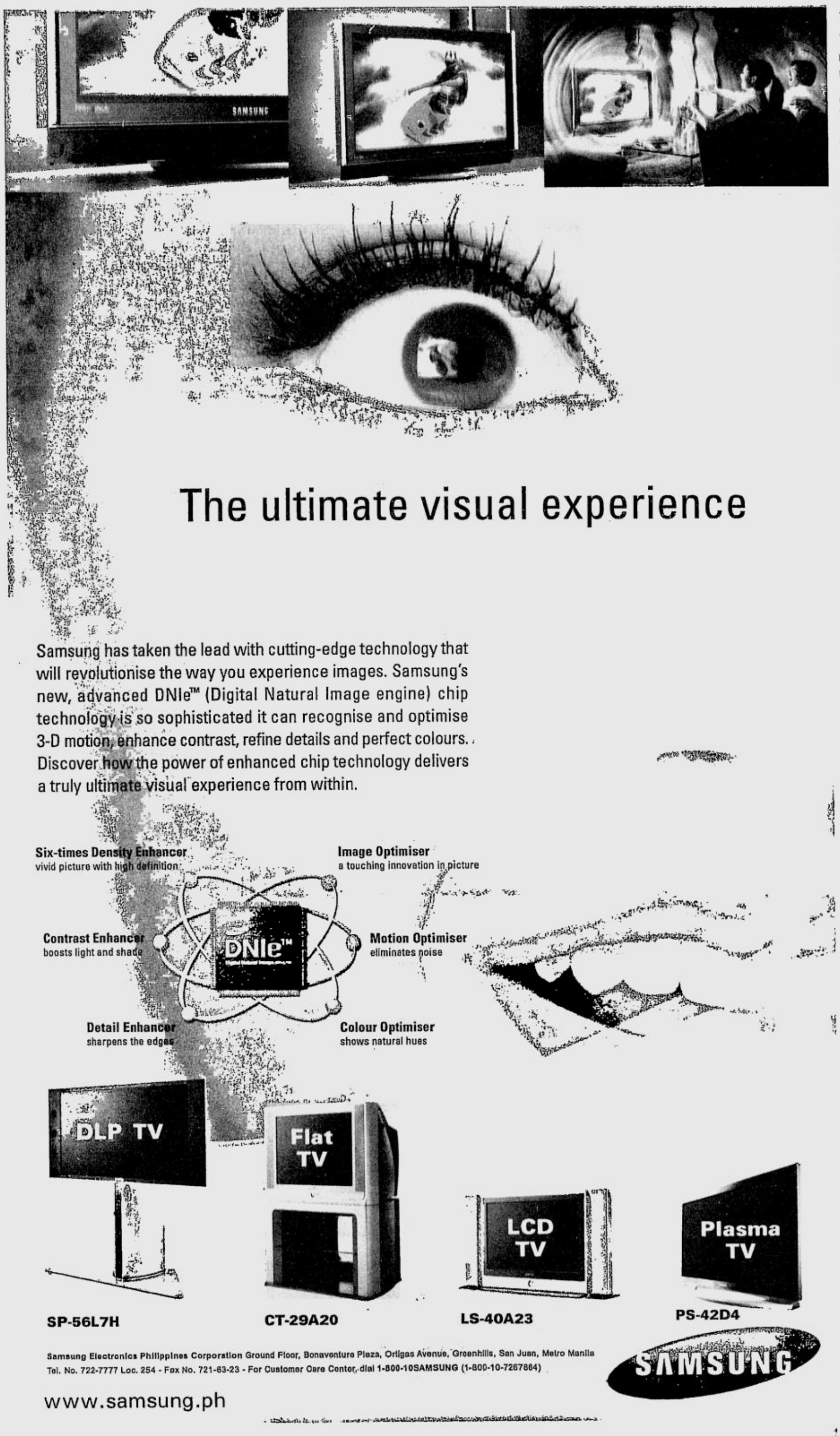

Erap to seek . . .

From page A1

to visit Fernando Poe Jr. in the hospital.

"My friend of 40 years is in a very serious condition. I will ask the court to allow me to visit him possibly in the morning," he said.

Estrada, who is detained on plunder charges, said Poe's wife, actress Susan Roces, had told him that a visit might hasten his friend's recovery.

"I'm very depressed because of what happened to my buddy FPJ whom I consider our true president," Estrada said through his spokesperson, Didagen Dilangalen.

Estrada appealed to "Christians, Muslims, Iglesia ni Cristo, and people with other religions to pray for the quick recovery of our elected president (Poe)."

He noted that many people continued to believe that Poe had won the presidential election in May, with 65 percent of them saying that President Macapagal-Arroyo had cheated in the election.

"*Ako'y inagawan ng pwesto* (My post was stolen). *Si FPJ ay inagawan ng panalo* (Poe was robbed of victory)," said the former President, who was ousted in 2001.

Estrada, a former actor, said the fight of his friend must be pursued, referring to Poe's appeal before the Supreme Court for a recount.

Lunch in Tanay

He said Poe was supposed to visit him this morning in his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, along with Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero.

"FPJ was supposed to ... also send me off for a hopefully successful operation in Hong Kong," he said.

Asked whether he would still have a knee operation in Hong Kong this month should Poe's condition worsen, Estrada said he would.

"This will be worse if both of us become unwell," said Estrada, who faces possible paralysis from the waist down should he forego the operation.

Estrada was first granted permission to undergo operation in the United States last year, but he did not push through with the trip partly because he had wanted to stay in the country to help Poe in the presidential campaign.

Former actress Amalia Fuentes said Poe could have taken his loss in the election too seriously that it affected his health.

His running mate, Loren Legarda, thinks otherwise. "It's difficult and unfair to speculate when it concerns someone else's health. Anything could happen," she said.

Health buff

Fuentes said she was shocked when she first heard of the news. "I know him to be a health buff. He's only 64, younger than [former president] Joseph [Estrada]. It's possible *na dinamdam niya ang pagkatalo (he felt bad about the loss)*," she told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Poe is the type of person who does not articulate what he feels, according to actress Boots Anson-Roa.

"I'm sure he wasn't happy about losing. It's but normal to feel depressed," said Anson-Roa, who ran for senator under Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. "Depression could be a mitigating factor," she said.

"But I remember seeing Ronnie [Poe's nickname] and Susan in a gathering, mingling with people who didn't vote for them. They were fine. I'd like to believe that they're beyond that now," she said.

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RP joins UN Assembly rebuff to oust-Annan bid

From page A1

"We have worked well with him in the past, and look forward to working with him for sometime in the future."

Danforth added: "No one, to my knowledge, has cast doubt on the personal integrity of the secretary general."

The statement not only aligned the United States with 190 other UN members, but more so reversed the refusal a week ago of US President George W. Bush to support Annan after Minnesota Republican Sen. Norm Coleman called for the resignation of Annan for failing to exercise effective oversight over the oil-for-food program oversight program, which allowed Iraq to import goods under Security Council supervision to ease the impact of UN sanctions on the regime of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people.

Coleman's resignation call was expressed in vehement language that reflected the intensity of the anger of the Republican administration toward Annan.

Coleman, who is reported to have close ties with the White House, had called for Annan's resignation in a statement to the conservative Wall Street Journal.

Coleman, who chairs the Senate permanent subcommittee on investigations, which had been investigating the oil-for-food scandal, said: "One conclusion is abundantly clear: Kofi Annan should resign."

Coleman said: "I have arrived at this conclusion "because the most extensive fraud in the history of the UN occurred on his watch." He said that as long as Annan was in charge, "the world will never be able to learn the full extent of the bribes, kickbacks and under-the-table payments that took place under the UN's collective nose."

He suggested that Annan had been less forthcoming about the role of his son, Kojo Annan, a Nigeria-based businessman, who is reported to have received $2,500 a month from Cotecna, a Swiss firm hired to monitor Iraq's imports under the oil-for-food program.

Bush's browbeater

Coleman served as the browbeater of what appeared to be an orchestrated campaign in the Republican-controlled program to undermine the United Nations that, under Annan's leadership, had stood in the way of Bush's unilateral decisions to go to war in Iraq.

The passion and anger behind the drive to blast out Annan from the United Nations were ill-concealed by the vehemence of its language.

Another Republican legislator, New Jersey's Scott Garrett, said that the question regarding Annan was "whether he should be in jail."

Stepping up the heat to make Annan step down, Bush had refused to hold back his attack pack.

Interviewed about Coleman's statement, Bush had said he looked forward to the "full disclosure of facts." He said: "It's important for the integrity of the UN to have a full and open disclosure of all that took place with the oil-for-food program."

He had issued a veiled threat that the United States might consider withholding its funding of the United Nations unless Annan acted for full disclosure. The United States provides 22 percent of the UN's budget.

This threat, as well as the apparently concerted attack on Annan and the United Nations, seized on the involvement of Annan's son as an opening salvo of the campaign to get back at Annan.

The campaign triggered the international polarization of hostility against the United States and the reopening of the cleavage between Washington and its European allies that opposed the US-led invasion of Iraq.

In supporting Annan, Britain, which was the chief US ally in the invasion, rejoined the Europeans in backing Annan.

The attack was payback time for Annan who had antagonized the Bush administration because the Republicans thought he had sided with the Democratic presidential candidate, Sen. John Kerry. Annan also refused to send UN staff to Iraq, saying "it's still not safe," and had told BBC before the election that the war in Iraq was "Illegal."

The left-leaning Guardian newspaper in London read political vengeance in the Bush administration's campaign against Annan and the United Nations. This was the contention of Hans Blix, the UN chief inspector in Iraq who scrutinized Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction capacity before the war, in an article at the Guardian.

"Washington seems to take victory in the presidential election as support for its decision to launch the war on Iraq and for its disdainful attitude to the UN," Blix said.

Unfair criticism

"There is an intense campaign of vilification, depicting the UN as 'corrupt.' It is as if the UN had insulted the US."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said criticism of Annan was "unfair" and that he was grateful for his leadership on many occasions."

He said: "I believe that Kofi Annan is doing a fine job ... often in very difficult circumstance. I hope very much he is allowed to get on with the job."

In backing Annan, Blair closed ranks with France and Germany. After meeting Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in Germany, President Jacques Chirac of France said: "Germany and France reiterate their full support for Kofi Annan whose commitment to the aims of the United Nations is total."

Russian President Vladimir Putin also backed Annan.

Annan rebuttal

After the reelection of Bush, Blair, in an attempt to display some independence from Bush's unilateral foreign policy that has sidelined America's traditional European allies, has worked more closely with France and Germany to rebuild the European Union as a counterweight to US hegemonistic tendency to exercise its military power.

Countering accusations that his son had profited from the oil-for-food program, Annan said, his son was "independent, a grown man. I don't get involved with his activities and he doesn't get involved in mine."

Although US Ambassador Danforth insisted that "there is a cloud over the UN" and the "only way to dispel the cloud is to let the sunlight in" through a transparent investigation by the United Nations, he conceded that Annan would not bear the burden of his son's behavior.

He said: "The son is an adult and I think, generally speaking, there is a perceived difference and a real difference between adults, children and their parents."

The Independent newspaper in London labeled the pursuit of Annan a "witchhunt." It described the attack as "the end game in a malicious campaign orchestrated by certain interests in the US with the single aim of discrediting the UN and all its works."

The oil-for-food program was undoubtedly tainted, the Independent said, "but the greater scandal by far is Washington's crude misuse of congressional investigation to exact revenge on the UN for its refusal to play George Bush's game in Iraq."

Angeles sizzles ...

From page A1

On Saturday, officials in this former American base town, unveiled a sizzling 2,890-kg serving of the native pork dish sisig, the biggest in the Philippines and probably in the world.

"Let sisig and other food specialties be our trademark, not prostitution," Mayor Carmelo Lazatin said as he opened the second Giant Sisig Festival at the Nepo Grounds here on Saturday night.

On Lazatin's cue, 80 aspiring chefs from the Holy Angel University and the Republic Central Colleges grilled the night's gustatory delight.

The finely chopped ingredients went into an oil-coated, heated stainless steel plate that was 4.87 meters wide and 9.75 meters long. The giant sisig was made with 1,200 kg of pork cheeks, 480 kg of pork rump (*pigue*), 480 kg of chicken liver, 510 kg of onions and 220 kg of *calamansi* (native lemons).

Its total weight excluded the amount of soy sauce, *siling labuyo* (native chili) and pepper, said Rhoda Austria, chief of the HAU's culinary school.

"It took us two days to prepare the ingredients," said Austria. She also led the team of cooks in last year's May 17 launch. Typhoon "Yoyong" delayed this year's festival by a week.

The huge serving, almost five times bigger than the one served last year, required the team to make the preparations at the city government-run abattoir, she said.

Outside the fence where the giant sisig plate sizzled, 10,000 holders of ticket stubs queued, waiting to be served. To show that they really came for the sisig and were determined to taste it, they shunned the area where bands were playing.

On both sides of the nearly three-hectare quadrangle, stalls sold cold beer and steamed rice, proof positive that sisig was no longer pregnant women's fare—it had become a favorite *pulutan* (bar chow) and main course.

Lucia Cunanan, who elevated sisig to fame, was recognized during the event for "enriching the Kapampangan culture."

Sisig was first eaten by pregnant women, as recorded by Fray Diego Bergano in his 17th-century book, "Vocabulario de la Lengua Pampanga en Romance."

Sisig, Bergano said, was a cocktail snack of unripe mango, guava or papaya. It was anything fermented in vinegar. *Mapanisig* was someone who was fond of snacking on sour food.

Local practice also had the *cacagli* (women in their first trimester of pregnancy) nibbling on sour fruits to relieve their discomfort.

"It is supposed that at this stage, the expectant mother seeks comfort in the wisdom of older women and, being Kapampangans, they always have something to munch on as they chat," the HAU's Center for Kapampangan Studies wrote on the sisig's origin.

Soon, the center said, the pregnant woman's concern for the baby in her womb grew.

Sisig became a food for the *butul ning pingul* (baby's bones).

The center noted that "as the pregnancy progresses, usually in the last trimester, the expectant mother prepares a different kind of sisig. This time, the dish is a concoction of pig's ears and tail in vinegar."

The cartilage, mothers said, made the bones of the fetus stronger.

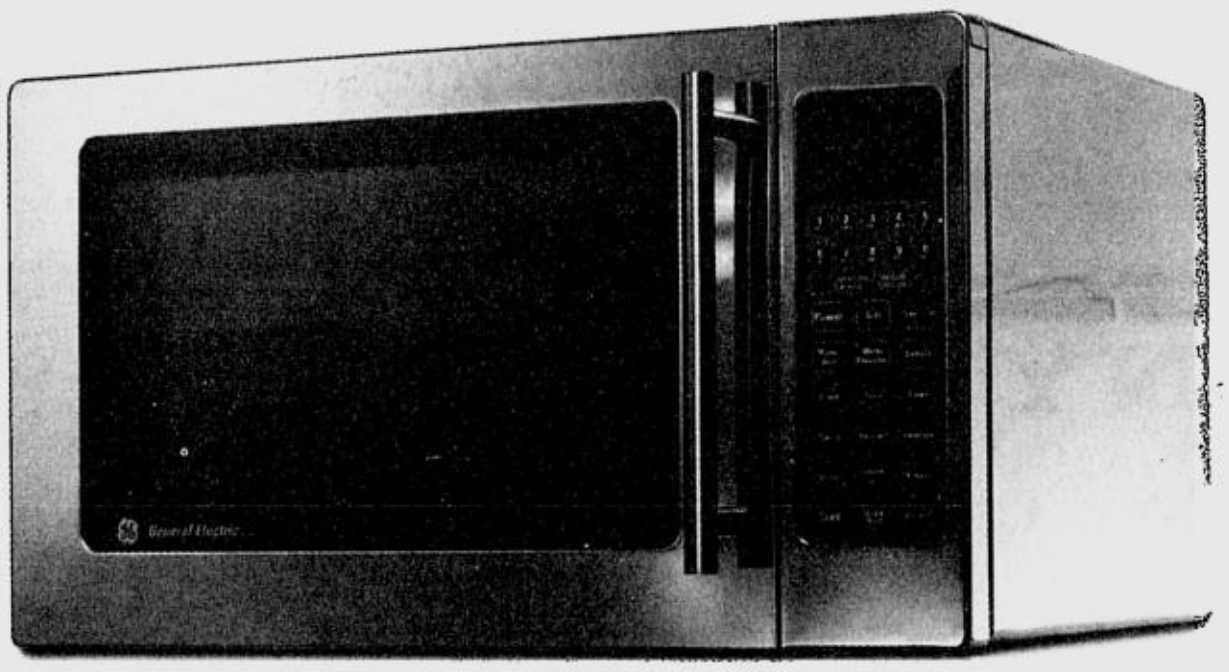
How sisig was turned into *pulutan* could be traced to a certain Fely, a barbecue vendor in the 1970s.

According to a local tale, Fely empathized with the suffering of the wives of the drunks that she served the men sisig, which was then exclusive to pregnant women.

Fortunately or unfortunately, however, the men liked it.

By 1974, Cunanan, or *Aling* Lucing to many, added pork cheeks and chicken liver to the sisig. In place of vinegar, she used lemons.

The 1980s saw the Sugay family of Angeles opening the Sisig Benedict that served the dish in sizzling plates. At about the same time, the Tayag family opened the restaurant Trellis in Quezon City, popularizing the Kapampangan specialty in Metro Manila.



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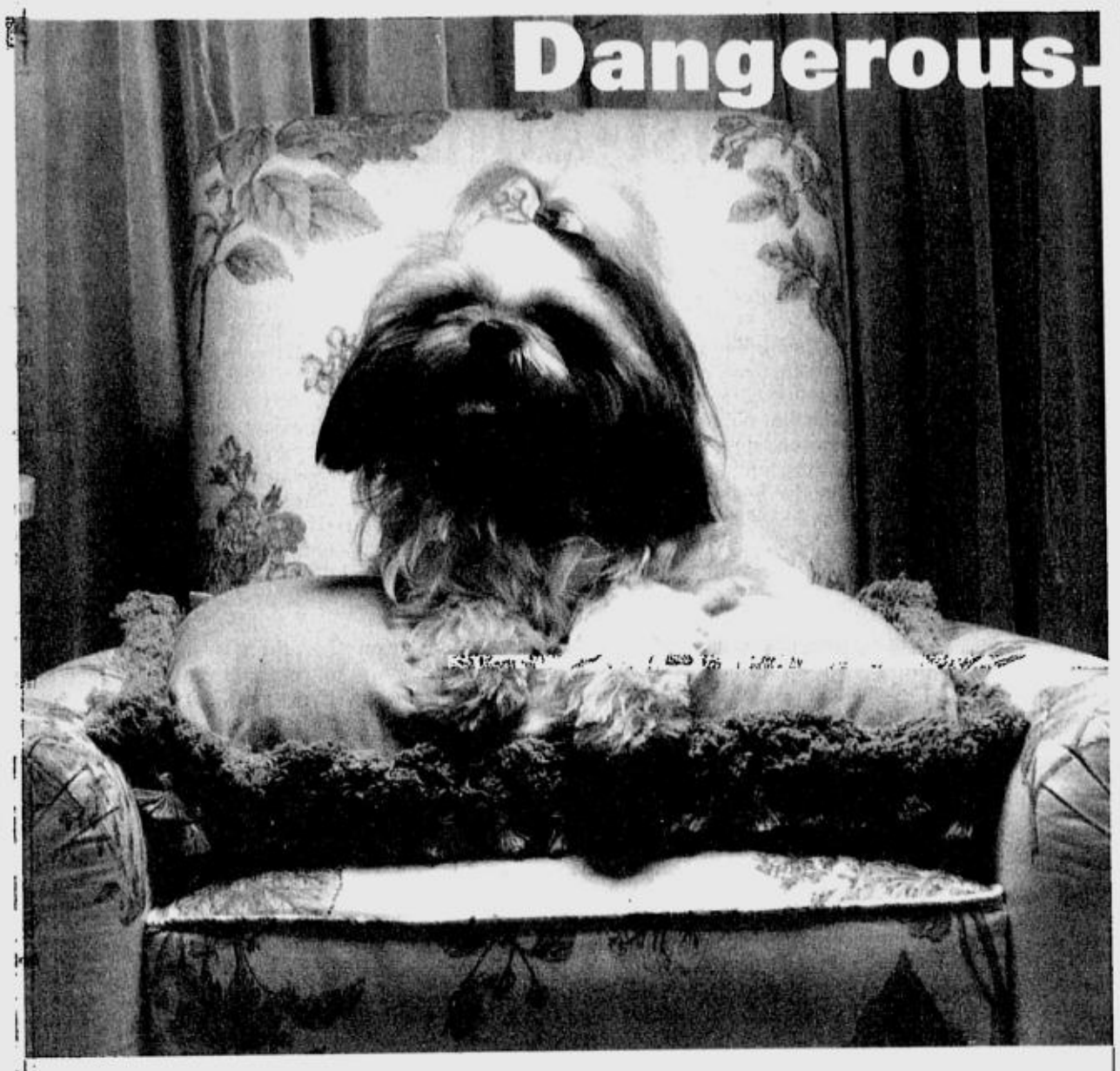

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XMAS WORK HOURS

Staggered sked starts Dec. 15

By Margaux C. Ortiz

STARTING Wednesday, public and private employees will have to report for work on different hours.

Under the Staggered Working Time (SWT) scheme, government workers will be required to work from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., while private employees will have to work from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The new work schedule formulated to help ease traffic during the Christmas season was approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday, said Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando said the SWT would be in place from Dec. 15 to Jan. 6, 2005.

"I talked with the President this morning and she approved of the scheme," Fernando said in the agency's weekly program on radio station dzBB.

Fernando added that the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council, comprised of representatives from the government, business and labor sectors, gave a thumbs up last week when the MMDA proposed the revival of the SWT.

The MMDA chief said that according to the MMDA's experience, a two-hour time difference between the working schedule of government and private employees would be effective in addressing the Christmas traffic.

"This is not an experiment. The scheme has been proven to work," Fernando said, adding that the SWT would also decongest the mass transit systems during rush hour.

He stressed that only employees of government and private offices would be included in the scheme.

"The implementation of the SWT excludes the schools," Fernando said.

The MMDA chair said that if found effective, the scheme which could remove 30 percent of the workforce from the road could be made permanent.

Fernando said there were some two to three million private employees and 500,000 government workers in Metro Manila.

WPD headquarters up for rehab

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE HEADQUARTERS of the Western Police District (WPD) is next on the list of places eyed for rehabilitation by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

"The building is actually a display of a breakdown of discipline. The parking inside is so disorderly that it has become susceptible to machinations of criminal elements," said Atienza.

Atienza initiated the rehabilitation project, which the mayor believes will help the Manila police do its job better.

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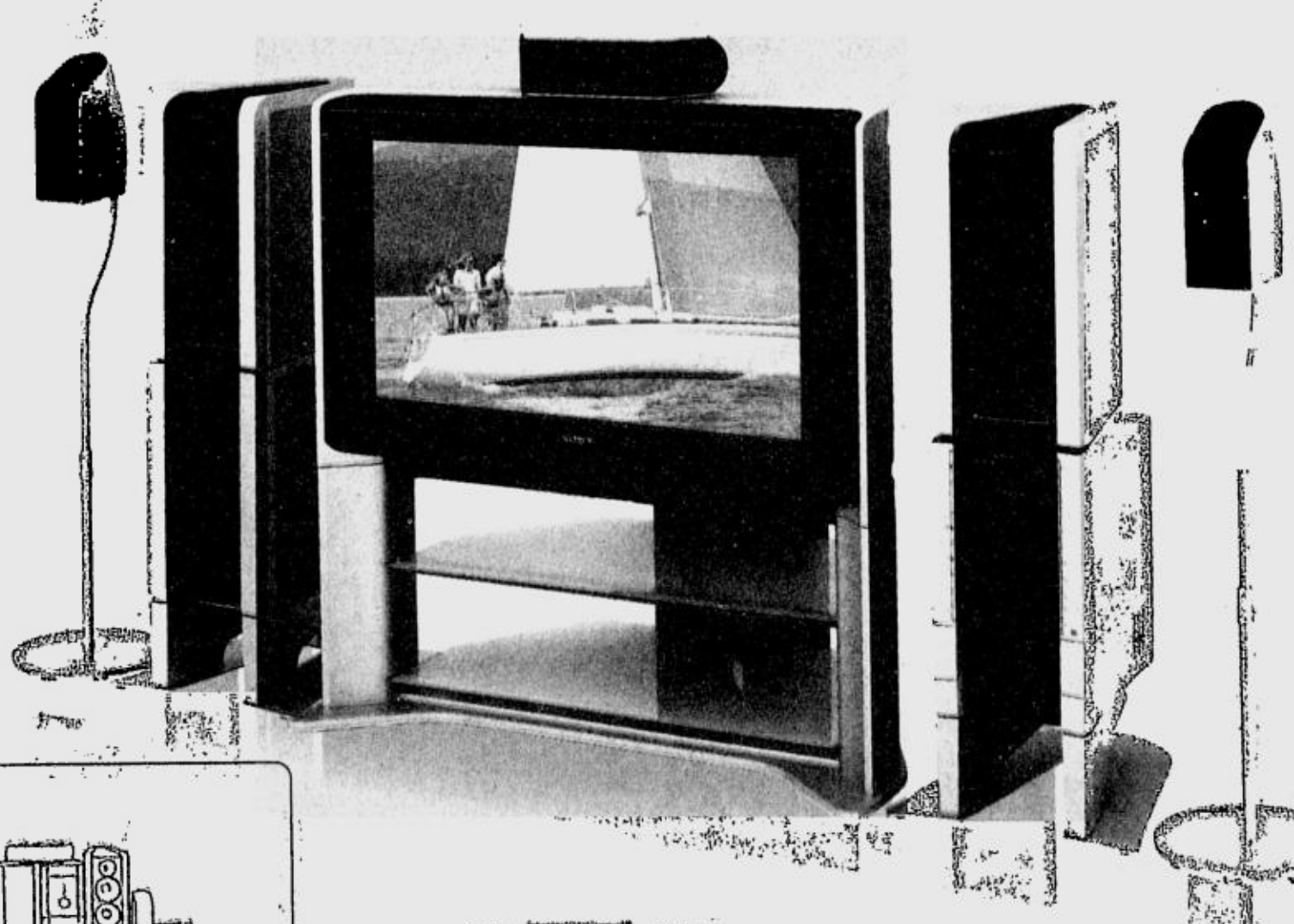

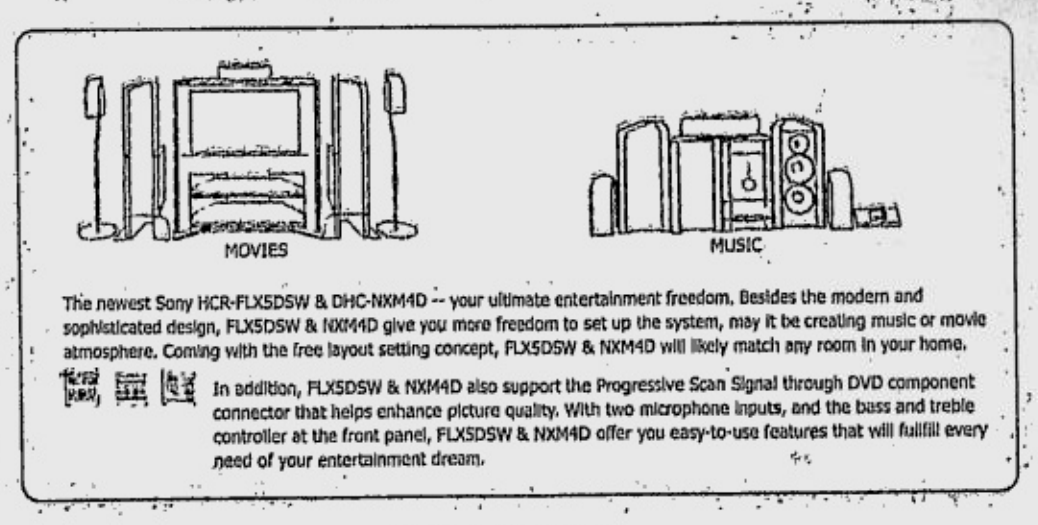

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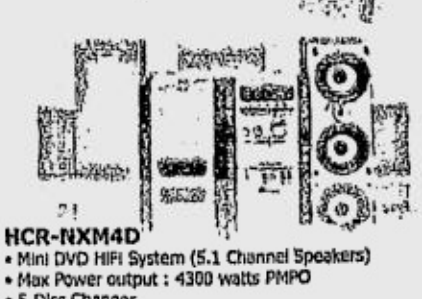

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Annabelle: Lure of money caused my troubles

By Nini Valera

LOVE for money has placed talent manager Annabelle Rama in trouble—again.

"I was blinded by money again that's why I agreed to manage Rochelle Sheree Quiambao," Rama told INQUIRER Entertainment in Filipino yesterday.

Rochelle's mother, Shirley, has filed a complaint against Rama before the Quezon City court, accusing her of breaking their agreement in the management of the young actress.

The Quiambaos have also sought damages and have asked the court to prevent Rama from causing prejudice to Rochelle's show biz career.

They also accused Rama of selling to them over-priced jewelry.

But Rama denied the charges.

"We agreed that she would act as co-producer in a Valentine concert that I would stage next year. But the check she issued me as her share in the costs of the concert bounced," she explained.

Rama claimed that when Shirley first asked her to manage Rochelle, she already saw the girl's inadequacies, like her inability to speak in Filipino.

Rochelle grew up and studied in the US.

But when Quiambao started inviting Rama to dine in five star hotels and buying the jewelry she had for sale, the talent manager was lured into entering into a management contract with the Quiambaos, Rama claimed.

From the start, Rama told the Quiambaos that they needed to spend money to drive Rochelle to the top. The expenses, Rama said, were for public relations.

Rama claimed that after a whirl of publicity, Quiambao demanded that Rama book Rochelle in all television shows of GMA 7, where Rama's son, Richard Gutierrez, is a contract star.

"One time, she told me she would buy jewelry if I could see to it that Rochelle becomes a presenter at the Star Awards," Rama related.

She claimed, "She bribed me into doing what she wanted by buying jewelry from me."

Shirley said she bought P2 million worth of jewelry from Rama but when appraised, the gems were worth only half the price.

Rama complained that the girl did not perform as she had expected.

"I was even embarrassed when she guested in 'Mulawin' because she couldn't deliver the dialogue in Filipino," Rama claimed.

The talent manager said she was set to file counter charges against the Quiambaos for the bouncing checks Rama claimed Shirley had issued to her, for breach of contract for Rochelle's withdrawal from the concert, and for libel for making slanderous statements against her.

Jalosjos collapses, rushed to hospital

By Nancy C. Carvajal

RAPE convict former Zamboanga Rep. Romeo Jalosjos was rushed to a hospital outside the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) Saturday night after he complained of chest pains, an official said.

"He was having chest pains and shortness of breath," according to NBP officer-in-charge Insp. Emilio Tupaz.

It was the second time in three months that Jalosjos was taken out of prison for confinement in a hospital.

In October, he was confined at the Makati Medical Center (MMC) after he collapsed in his cell at the maximum security compound.

Extensive medical examination done on Jalosjos at that time showed that he was free of coronary artery disease.

The MMC told the INQUIRER yesterday that Jalosjos was not on the list of patients confined at the hospital.

However, a staff member at the hospital's admitting section said, "He might be under a different name. That's why his name did not appear on the computer."

Las Piñas fish port, bridge park open

THE PAST and the future meet today as Las Piñas inaugurates the rehabilitated Zapote Bridge Park and the new fish port complex.

Sen. Manny Villar leads the inauguration of the two projects with President Macapagal-Arroyo as guest of honor.

The Zapote bridge was the site of a major battle between Spanish colonial forces and Filipino revolutionaries on Feb. 16, 1897.

In a statement, Villar said the bridge project was part of his and his wife Rep. Cynthia Villar's constituency work and advocacy.

Meanwhile, the fish port is envisioned to revive fishing as the source of livelihood among residents and to make Las Piñas the fishing capital of Metro Manila.

"I hope that the bridge park and the fish port will be sources of pride to my constituents in Las Piñas," the senator said.

Manila readies wells

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza has ordered local officials to prepare six deep wells in the city in case of a water shortage due to blockage at the Umiray aqueduct in General Nakar, Quezon.

This aqueduct channels water from the Umiray River and supplies 30 percent of Angat Dam's water reserves.

Atienza said Manila had six deep wells which may be tapped if needed.

The deep wells are in the Tondo Sports Complex, the P. Gomez Elementary School in Sta. Cruz, the Muslim Center, the Albert Elementary School in Sampaloc, the Paraiso ng Batang Maynila Playground in Malate, and the Bacood Elementary School in Sta. Mesa.

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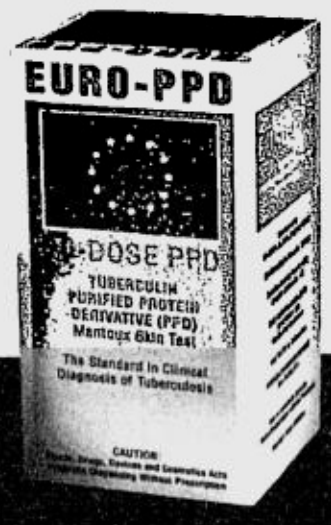

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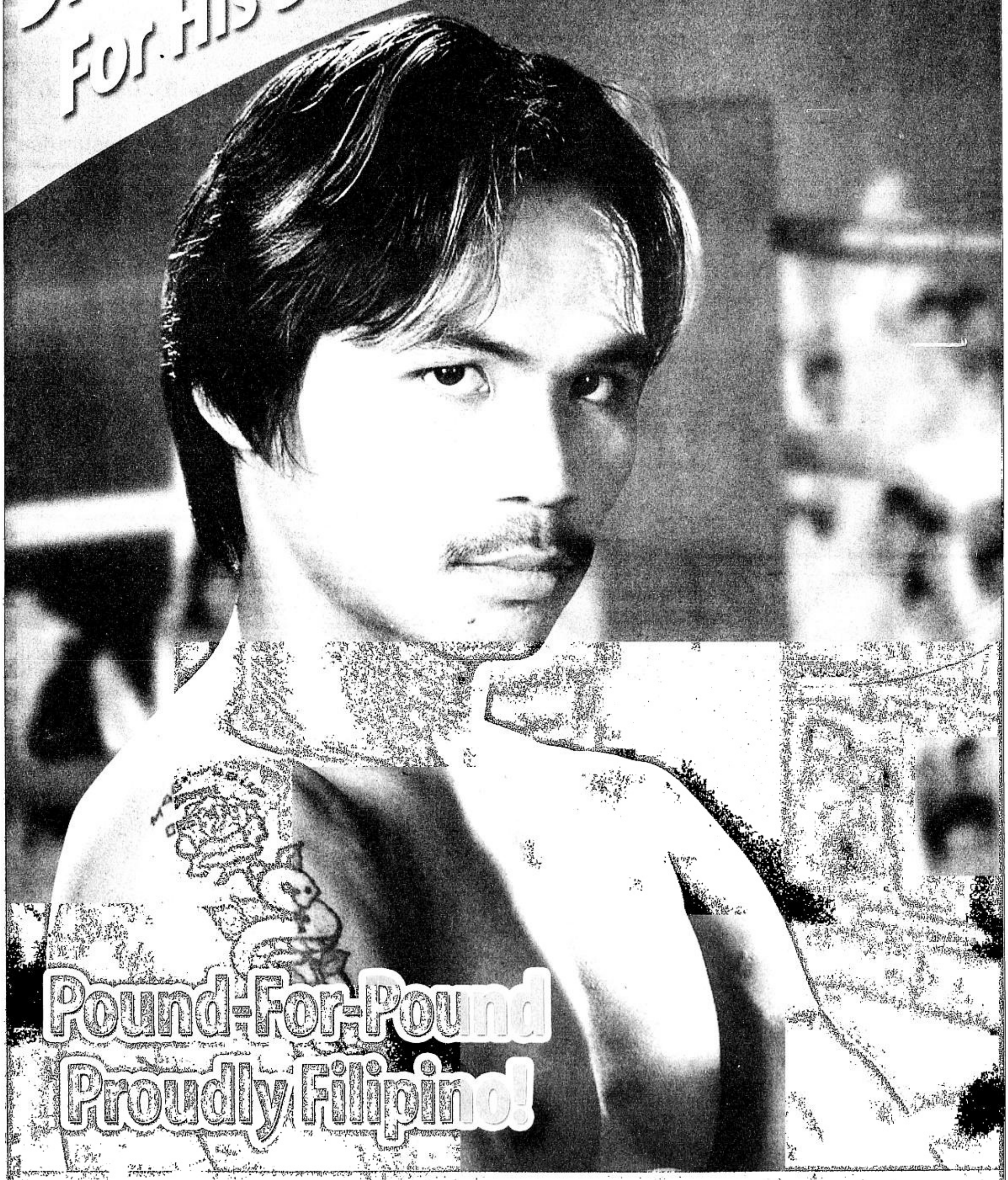

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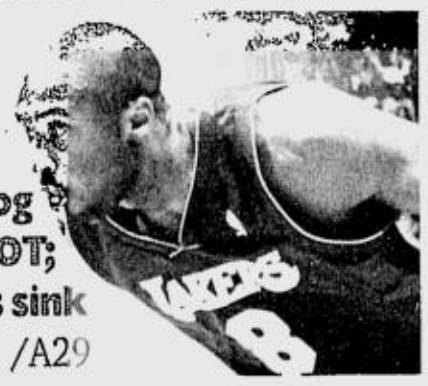
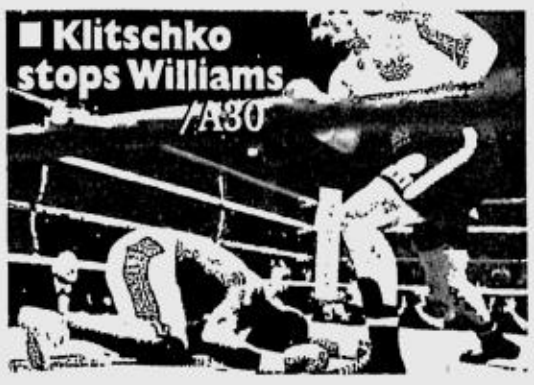
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

■ Blu Girls overwhelm Thais, 8-0 /A27

WHAT'S INSIDE



■ Kings flog Pacers in OT; LA Lakers sink Clippers /A29



■ Klitschko stops Williams /A30

Nike Golf sweeps Fil-Am tourney /A26

Empire King reigns in Gold Cup /A31

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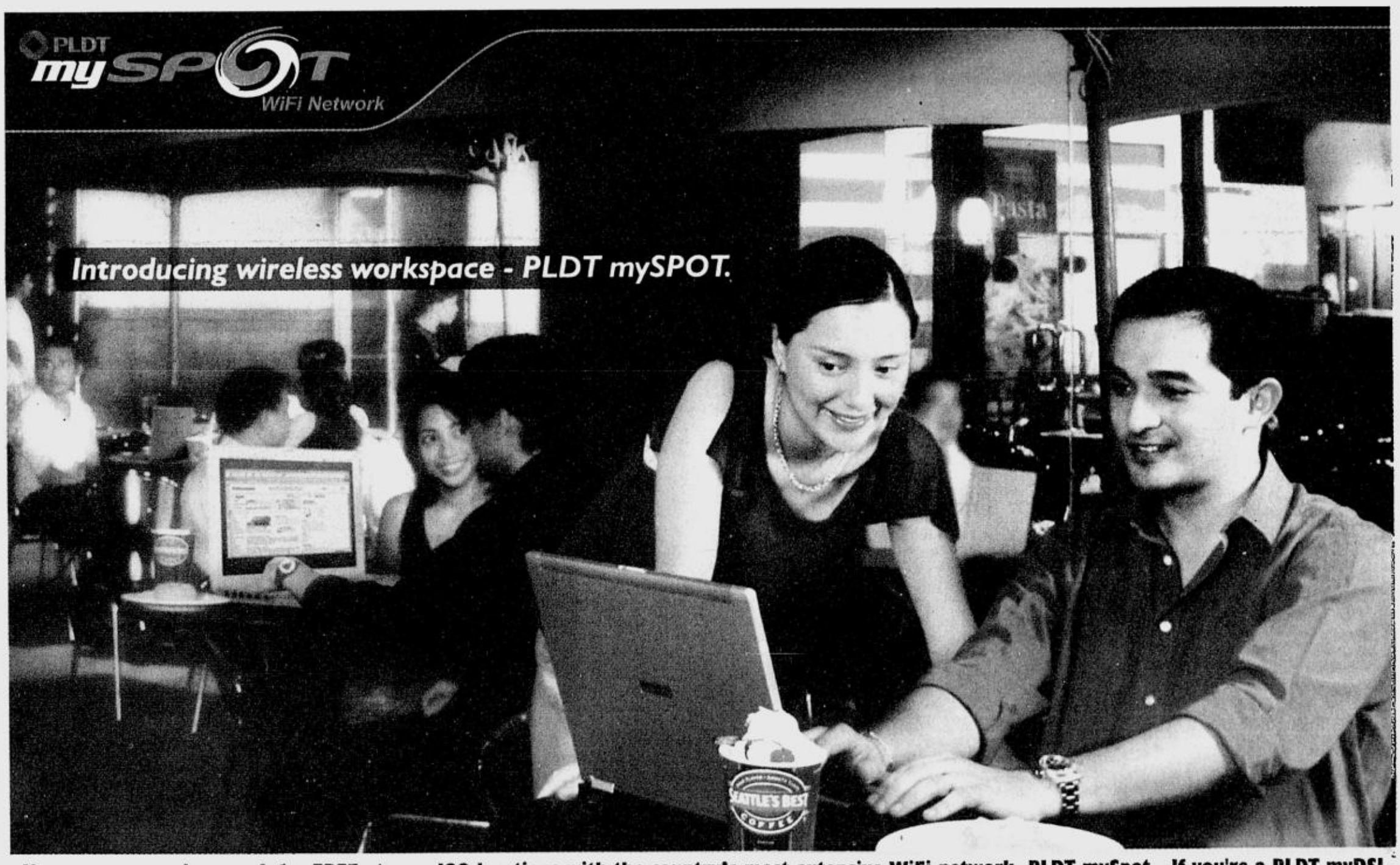

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Cheesecake Etc. - Ground Floor Greenbelt 1, Ground Floor Makati Executive Center
Enterprise Center - Ayala Ave cor Paseo de Roxas
Makati 1 HotZone - Makati Ave cor Dela Rosa
Mobile 1 - Ground Level Park Square
Ayala Center
Netopia - Greenbelt Mall, Ground Level Park Square
Papermart - Greenbelt Telecom Center Greenbelt 1
Powerplant Mall - Concourse Level
Seattle's Best Coffee - 1st Level Greenbelt 3, 1st Level Paseo Center (IBM Plaza), Rockwell Center
True Value - Powerplant Mall Rockwell Center
Mandaluyong
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PAL Mabuhay Lounge (Domestic)
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PETRON

Nike Golf sweeps Fil-Am as Juvic foils Murakami

By Musong R. Castillo

BAGUIO CITY—With dozens of teams and more than a thousand players in all, the 55th Fil-Am Invitational was a success in itself.

A virtual match play that decided the battle for the centerpiece Fil division was the icing on the cake.

Juvic Pagunsan and Artemio Murakami of Southwoods clashed in the final group Sunday and the country's amateur ace prevailed in a not-so-pretty manner to give Nike Golf the Fil title and a sweet sweep of the championship division.

Pagunsan tallied 33 points and Murakami a measly 27 at the short up-and-down Baguio Country Club layout here, and it proved to be the difference for Nike Golf, which had earlier completed an anti-climactic romp in the Am category.

The heroics of Pagunsan saved the day for Nike, which lost a three-point overnight lead after Gene Bondoc of Southwoods assembled a 37, one-under 60 in medal play.

Together with Jun Jun Plana's 33 and Michael Bibat's 32, Southwoods was waiting in the clubhouse with the lead, hoping for a decent round from Murakami to complete a comeback from 14 points down.

But Pagunsan held sway in difficult conditions and Murakami failed to keep in step.

Nike Golf went on to score 130 for the day to prevail by four points with its 556 total and complete a Cinderella finish.

"It's a clean sweep in our maiden tournament," said Nike Golf team manager Nick Tuason. "We can't ask for a better result."

Southwoods, bannered by promising youngsters in its development program, had a final-round 129 for 552. PAL Interclub champion Del Monte (516 and 488) and last year's Fil winner Mizuno-DHL (502 and 453) finished third and fourth, respectively, in both the Fil and Am divisions.

Former caddies' champion Jay Bayron assembled a 34, Abe Rosal accounted for 32 and Boyet Saragoza was the last to count for Nike's Fil squad with his 31.

Bayron went on to edge Bondoc by three points for the individual title with 145.

Murakami, after bringing Southwoods to within three with a perfect 58 on Saturday, had just one birdie against five bogeys aside from pick-ups on Nos. 3, 5 and 11.

Tommy Manotoc signed for a third 36 in four days as the Nike Am team completed a 43-point win, also over Southwoods.

The 55-year-old former national team mainstay won his first individual Am title with a 147 total, nine strokes up on teammate Dave Hernandez. Manotoc had won the Fil individual title a record eight times.

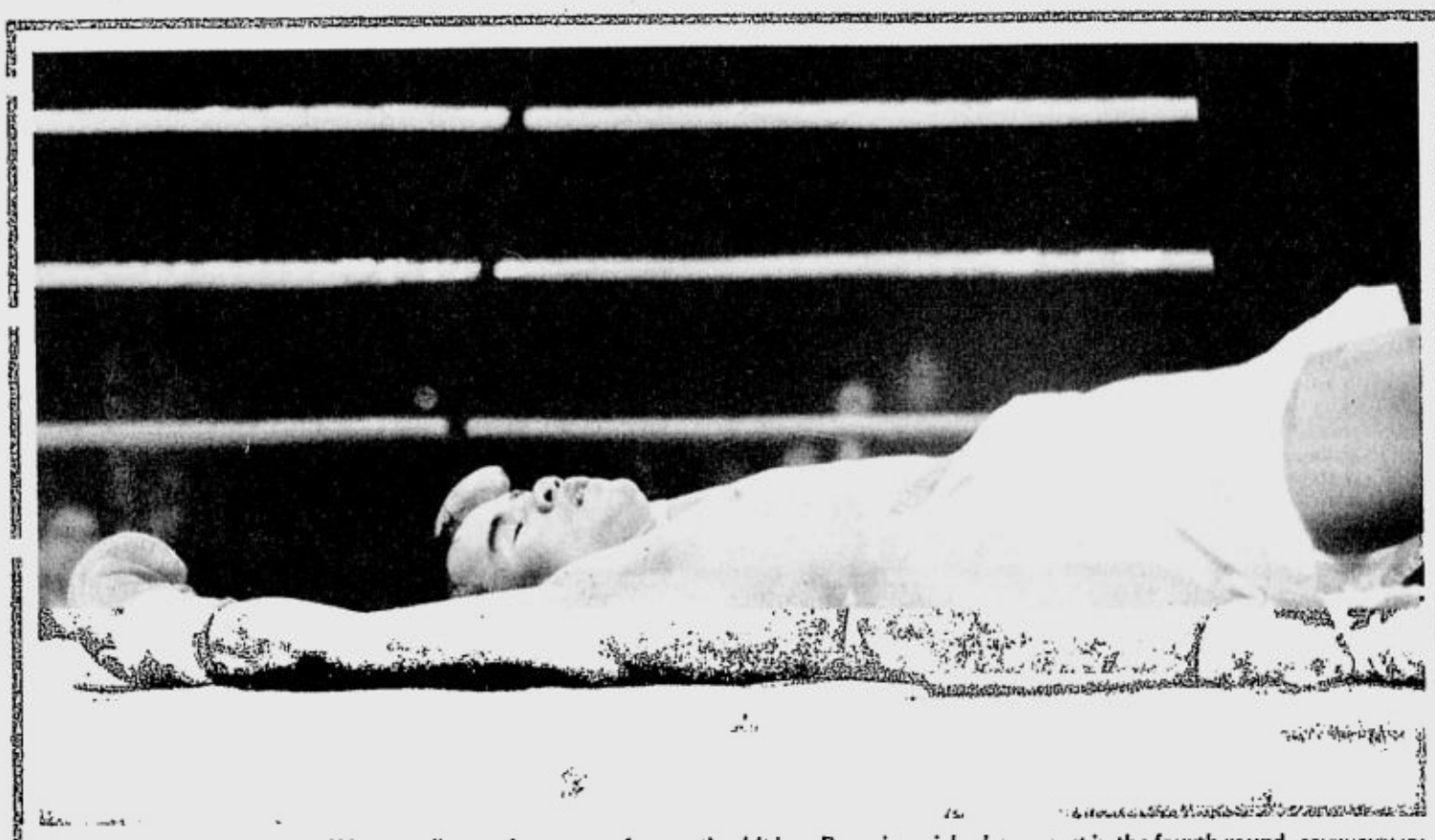
"The important thing for us is our participation here," said Manotoc. "I give kudos to Southwoods for the development that it is undertaking, especially with young players.

Presented by Smart Communications, the tournament was also supported by Northwest Airlines, Royal Caribbean, Lucerne Jewelers, Wilson Sports, Heritage Park, Caltex, Ottica Eyewear, Lamoiyan-Hapee, San Miguel, Aresi, Ayala Land, Club Marinduque and U-Bix Corp.

PAGUNSAN delivers with a 33.

Camp John Hay came up with 102 to rule the Fil Flight A with 439. The Ram Masters Golf Team was second with 418.

Crystal Dew Matikas scored 94 for 328 to rule the Am Division Flight B while Syndicate totaled 337 to capture the Flight C crown. Publicis Dialog-Shoemart won the Flight D title with 293.



DOWN AND OUT: Fahsan 3K Battery lies on the canvas after getting hit by a Pacquiao wicked uppercut in the fourth round. ROMY HOMILLADA

Pacquiao stamina stinks

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

MANNY Pacquiao, please listen because not even your best friend would dare tell you this:

Pacman, you indeed looked super, terrific, golden, great out there when you stopped your ambitious Thai foe on Saturday.

You averted what could've been another national disaster by staying on your feet and scoring that screaming knockout.

You could now take a break and splurge.

Here's a salute. Happy Holidays.

Happy Birthday, happy hero.

Now, listen, please.

Your conditioning, your stamina stinks.

You indeed packed the big punch.

You were able to display a budding new weapon in your arsenal: your promising right cross.

But you came to that championship fight with your oxygen tank only half full.

***

You're free to deny this.

But if you do, you'd only be fooling yourself.

It's like this: By the third round, you were trying to suck in air.

You were already breathing through your mouth.

Well, you did start out like a house on fire.

There was no denying you wanted to pin the Thai down, floor him for good after the first bell.

But then, your timing was off right at the start.

You were very tight. You were sluggish.

In short, you were not ready for that big one against Juan Manuel Marquez.

***

You were, at best, only half ready for a super featherweight like Marquez.

Thank God, Fahsan 3K Battery, despite all his noisy vows to stop you, did not happen to be a distant cousin of Señor Marquez.

You could've stopped the Thai with only one hand: your left.

In fact, you did crush him, to the delight of all of us, after coming in only half ready for a title bout.

I know you later admitted to someone close (to you) that you were something like 80 percent ready for the fight.

OK. No problem with your punching power.

You could even say you surpassed yourself in the fourth round with two successive uppercuts that both toppled Fahsan, the second one sending him airborne, then flat on the cold, slippery canvas for good.

***

But please don't believe what you had to say during the on-ring celebration.

Be more objective now. Be honest with yourself.

At best, you could've been only seventy per cent ready for that big assignment last Saturday. It could be a lot worse.

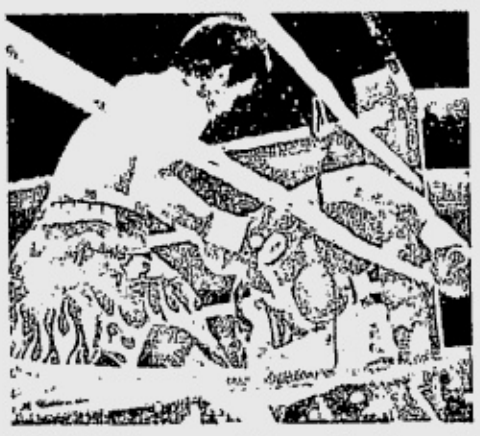
No, you were not expected to come in perfect, super-super form.

But, after having thanked everybody, why not thank also the guy who handpicked Fahsan for your tune-up match?

Fahsan was a darling. He fitted his role to a T.

Now, this is not to say that the Thai had to be sacrificed.

But, then, what if they had taken somebody who could box and move around?



PACQUIAO corners Fahsan with a flurry of punches in the second round. EDWIN BACASMAS

What if they had brought you a foe who could slip past your deadly reach, say, in the first four rounds.

You would have lost your breath come the fifth or sixth.

You would've spent your poor oxygen thank empty.

And then: disaster.

***

Well, it's too late now, but it would've been a totally different story if the Thais, as initially planned, had decided to make Fahsan run in the first rounds to induce tiredness.

We've all been very lucky that Fahsan, a pure fighter, did not happen to be a master boxer equipped with enviable ringmanship.

He was a flat, out-and-out slugger who just stood there and dished out what he could take.

If Fahsan had, say, borrowed a pair of magical Ali fighting shoes that could've allowed him to stay out of your killer fists for maybe four rounds, we could've all woke up the morning after feeling like a funeral parlor.

Fahsan was later overheard offering his apologies.

But, then, he had nothing to be sorry about.

He did his role, provided the perfect share for a perfect mismatch, if there's such a thing.

***

Have you talked to Lenny de Jesus, your visiting cut man?

Ronnie Nathanielsz, who cares for you as he would a favorite son, said Lenny had told him that your timing was off right in the first round.

"The fight against Fahsan was great for the fans, but definitely not for Manny Pacquiao," Mr. Ronnie had quoted him as saying.

Ronnie also talked to Freddie Roach, your terrific trainer who leaves for California today.

From what Ronnie had told us, Freddie, although displeased with some gossip on his love life, was supposed to have advised you that you'd need loads and loads of hard work.

Why? Because it's Marquez, the deliberate master counter-puncher you'd be banging it up with in late February. Not Fahsan or another obscure Thai dreamer for that matter.

If Roach had not told you yet, he said you better cut your holidays short and report to the Wild Card Gym immediately the day after Christmas.

***

Please don't ask the amazed sidestreet fish vendor, the poor worker, everybody whom you had rendered ecstatic, very, very proud with your feat.

You were indeed incandescent, luminous, electric, and you charged the spirit up of the poor plodding *masa* with that magical knockout win of yours.

You did create an unforgettable Saturday night fever, complete with fireworks lighting up overcast skies.

But, then, if you ask people who know and love Philippine boxing, like Tony Aldeguer and Wakee Salud, both noted makers of world champions who were at ringside on Saturday, you'd be told that you need to shape up (for Señor Marquez) fast.

Wakee described your stamina against Fahsan as a screaming disaster.

Mr. Aldeguer said it was very evident you had to cram for the Fahsan bout.

I have nothing more to add. Thanks for the fun.

At least, you yourself had a good workout.

Alaska Aces repeat over Ginebra Kings

By June Navarro

GAME TOMORROW (*San Sebastian Recoletos Gym, Cavite City*)
6 p.m.—Red Bull vs Purefoods

THE ALASKA Aces have found a whipping boy in the Barangay Ginebra Gin Kings.

Just three weeks after stunning the Gin Kings, the Aces repeated the trick last night, posting a remarkable 102-88 victory that put them closer to a twice-to-beat incentive going into the playoffs of the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup.

Brandon Cablay scored 13 of his 16 points in the final half and led seven Aces in double figures as Alaska followed up its shocking 98-95 overtime win over Barangay Ginebra last Nov. 21 in a game where it trailed by as many as 23 points.

"We just caught them on a good night," said Alaska coach Tim Cone, whose Aces have now dealt the Gin Kings their only two setbacks in 10 games.

By notching their seventh victory in 16 games, the Aces are now in tight race with Purefoods, San Miguel Beer, Coca-Cola and Red Bull for the No. 4 spot and the twice-to-beat edge that goes with it.

But the Aces, despite enjoying a higher quotient over the other teams except Red Bull, is quite realistic about it.

"No. 4 is a possibility but Red Bull has to lose games for us," said Cone, who registered his first back-to-back victories in the conference.

In the second game, Coca-Cola caught Alaska at 6-9 via a 102-96 victory over Red Bull.

The Gin Kings were in the thick of the fight three-fourths of the way before their weary legs gave way, allowing the Aces to outscore them, 32-18, in the final quarter.

On his second game after coming off a five-game layoff due to a hurting knee, Mike Cortez quarterbacked the Aces offense led by Cablay, Jeffrey Cariaso and Reynel Hugnatan.

Cariaso and Hugnatan scored seven of their 15 points in the fourth while Sonny Thoss and Bong Hawkins finished with 13 points each. Don Allado and Cortez chipped in 12 points apiece.

Despite absorbing their fifth setback in 15 games, the Gin Kings remained in the hunt for one of the top two seats along with Talk 'N Text (11-4) and Shell (10-6).

Eric Menk dominated the shaded lane in the first half while Mark Caguioa and Jayjay Helterbrand took over in the third quarter as the Gin Kings kept the Aces at bay.

But Menk was limited to a single free throw and Caguioa had more misses than baskets in the last period to pave the way for Alaska's breakaway. Menk finished with 24 points and Caguioa added 20.

The scores:

First Game

ALASKA 102—Cablay 16, Hugnatan 15, Cariaso 15, Thoss 13, Hawkins 13, Cortez 12, Allado 12, Duat 6, Johnson 0, Padilla 0.

GINEBRA 88—Menk 24, Caguioa 20, Helterbrand 14, Adducul 9, Seigle 9, Santos 4, Valenzuela 3, Salvacion 3, Noble 2, Dimaunahan 0, Ballesteros 0.

Quarters: 21-20, 43-43, 70-70, 102-88.

Second Game

COCA-COLA 102—Peek 28, Arigo 16, Reavis 12, Morano 12, Avenido 10, Antonio 9, Wainwright 7, Julnio 6, Chia 2, Lao 0.

RED BULL 96—Villanueva 30, Tugade 24, Baguio 13, Asaytono 12, Lopez 10, Bernardo 4, Torlon 3, Robinson 0, Agapito 0, Alvarez 0.

Quarters: 20-18, 46-37, 73-68, 102-96

SPORTSWATCH

Ateneo de Manila, USC pace Milo caging

DAVAO CITY—Ateneo de Manila and Cebu's San Carlos University scored two victories each Saturday to show the way in the 2004 Milo BEST SSP/Passerelle national basketball finals at the Holy Cross gym here. The Manilas spilled defending champions Ateneo de Davao, 69-57, and then crushed Baguio's St. Louis University, 107-45, in the Passerelle division. St. Louis replaced Luzon regional champion St. Anthony College of Pampanga which did not show up. San Carlos downed Ateneo de Manila, 58-54, in overtime and Pampanga's St. Scholastica Academy, 62-35, to lord it over in the SBP (Small Basketeers Philippines) division. In other games, Ateneo de Iloilo whipped St. Louis, 107-45, in the Passerelle group; and Mindanao champion Ateneo de Zamboanga beat St. Scholastica Academy, 59-41, but bowed to Ateneo de Manila, 48-69, in the SBP category.

Jungolf Yuletide tourney set in 2 courses

TWO COURSES will be the battleground when the country's finest jungolfers dispute the titles in six divisions in the annual Christmas tournament of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines sponsored by Nike on Monday. Jungolfers in Class A (15-17 years), Class B (13-14), Class C (11-12) and Class D (9-10) will play at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna while those in Class E (7-8) and Class F (6 and under) will see action at the executive course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite. Interested players are advised to register on or before Dec. 17. Coinciding with the tournament is the renewal of membership and the election of officers. For inquiries, call the Jungolf office at 893-95-99. Nike, through its Philippine distributor PacSports Philippines, is providing giveways and will be raffling off items to all participants as part of its sponsorship.

75 fights get Pasay derby under way

SEVENTY-FIVE fights are on tap when the Pasko sa Pasay 4-Cock Derby gets going at 4 p.m. today at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. Organizers expect another banner crowd in the derby sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Mite Free. The three-day cockfest, which will also be held on Wednesday and Friday, is one of the two major derbies staged yearly by the PCC management, the other being the PCC Anniversary Derby in July. Pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano said that, as a Christmas gift to cockers, the P1.5 million prize will be given to the winners regardless of the number of entries. Entry fee is P8,800 with a minimum bet of P5,500. Participants vying in Wednesday's eliminations must submit their entries tomorrow from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 843-1890, 843-1746 or 816-6750.

Blu Girls overwhelm Thais, 8-0

VETERAN Corazon Soberre and young Syrel Ramos combined for a one-hit 8-0 shutout by the Philippine Blu Girls over Thailand yesterday at the start of the 8th Asian Women's Softball Championship at the Rizal Memorial ballpark.

GAMES TODAY (*Rizal Ballpark*)

8 a.m.—Chinese-Taipei vs. Japan
10 a.m.—DPR Korea vs. China
12 p.m.—Hong Kong vs. Korea
2 p.m.—Indonesia vs. Philippines
4 p.m.—India vs. Singapore
6 p.m.— Malaysia vs.Thailand

The 25-year-old Soberre mesmerized the Thai batters with an array of pitches, striking out five batters and giving up only a hit in four innings.

Ramos then took over in the fifth, yielding also a hit and retiring three of four batters to sustain the Blu Girls' run and clinch the easy win that enabled them to join defending champion China for the Group B lead.

The Chinese, winner of the last four stagings of the meet, crushed Indonesia in an abbreviated game, 13-0, while powerhouse Japan, third placer in the last Athens Olympics, also opened its campaign with an even more lopsided 28-0 romp over Hong Kong.

"Our pitchers and our hitters performed well," said national coach Rolly Malaguit in Filipino. "If we can play this way in our succeeding games, we have a big chance of reaching the finals."

With Soberre, part of the national team which saw action in the 2002 Busan Asian Games, and Ramos dominant on the mound, left fielder Reynali Ardio and pitcher Dione Macasu sparked a 10-hit attack against the Thais.

Ardio went three for three and drove in two runs while Macasu hit a triple to highlight a five-run, six-hit first inning that chased Thailand's star pitcher Pasinee Mantalamp.

Amnuay Klumdeng took over but failed to stop the Blu Girls' rampage. She allowed three hits and two runs in the second, and another hit and a run in the fourth.

The Philippines faces Indonesia today at 2 p.m., with either Macasu or Heidilyn Arca as starting pitcher.

"With this victory, I expect an even better game against Indonesia," said the 32-year-old Malaguit. "We saw how the Indons played against China and we have a very good chance of winning."

Japan opted to start Takayama instead of star pitcher Yukiko Ueno, who had a perfect game in the Japanese' 3-0 win over the Chinese in the battle for the bronze during the recent Athens Games.

She lost her bid for a perfect game when Hong Kong catcher Tang Choi Chu singled in the second inning.

"We're expected to win against Hong Kong, that's why we gave Ueno time to rest," said Japan coach Hidetomi Ikawa through an interpreter. "We want to get back at them. We're preparing against China."

REYNALI Ardio of the Philippines beats the tag of the Thai catcher in the first inning. JESS YUSON

The 12-nation meet, sponsored by San Miguel Corp., Cebuana Lhuillier, Oishi Products, Boysen Paints, Toyota, Chinese-Filipino Business Club, Sol Vic Industrial Products, Burlington Socks and Standard Electric, serves as the qualifying meet for Asia in the 2007 world championships in Shanghai.

The scores

First Game
Innings 123 456 7—R H E
Japan 6 4 1 8—28 19 1
Hong Kong 0 0 1 0—0 0 10
Batters: Juri Takayama (pitcher), Emi Inui (catcher), Japan; Yue Chi Wah, Young Oui Yi (pitcher), Yang Choi Chu (catcher), Hong Kong.

Second Game
Innings 123 456 7—R H E
China 5 4 2 2—13 15 0
Indonesia 0 0 0 0—0 2 2
Batters: Yu Huili, Oui Jia (pitcher), Lu Yi (catcher), China; Sunarish, Mutiara Halmaherawati (pitcher), Rhadiani Iskandar (catcher), Indonesia.

Third Game
Innings 123 456 7—R H E
Thailand 0 0 0 0 0—0 2 3
RP 5 2 0 1 X—8 10 1
Batters: Ma. Corazon Soberre, Syrel Ramos (pitcher), Haydee Bongas (catcher), Philippines; Pasinee Mantalamp, Amnuay Klumdeang (pitcher), Piyaporn Sitthi, (catcher) Thailand.

Del Rosario bows to World Cup champion

DEL ROSARIO: Foiled in the semifinals.

SINGAPORE—Asia's top-ranked bowler, Liza del Rosario of the Philippines, failed in her World Cup bid Sunday, bowing to eventual champion Shannon Pluhowsky of the United States, 0-2 (229-259 and 169-269), in the semifinals at the SuperBowl SAFRA Mount Faber lanes here.

The 26-year-old Del Rosario looked impressive in knocking out Sweden's Helen Johnsson, 2-0, in Saturday's quarterfinals. But she lost her touch against No. 2 seed Pluhowsky, the 2002 winner and last year's runner-up to Canada's Kerrie Ryan-Clach.

Pluhowsky, the 22-year-old US national amateur champion, won the tournament again Sunday with a 2-0 (236-200, 234-185) victory over Ryan-Ciach.

The other Philippine entry, Chester King, was eliminated in the quarterfinals Saturday.

Ryan-Clach outsteadied Puerto Rico's Yoselin Leon, 2-1 (279-190, 193-257 and 208-193), in the other semifinal contest to set up a rematch for the 40th AMF World Cup crown with Pluhowsky.

Del Rosario missed the opportunity to pull ahead after the seventh frame when she left the 3-6-7-10 pin standings and failed to convert the split. That left her 12 pins behind going into the ninth.

The American took full advantage and struck out to take a 1-0 lead.

Pluhowsky carried the momentum from the first game to the second as she reeled off six consecutive strikes from frame 2 through 7.

The men's semifinal and championship rounds were also scheduled for Sunday.

Singapore's Remy Ong, the No. 6 seed, faced No. 2 seed Petter Hansen of Norway in the opening semifinal. No. 5 seed Yahav Rabin of Israel and No. 8 seed Kai Virtanen of Finland were paired in the second match.

Coseteng bags Touring Car crown

ROSARIO, Batangas—Caltex Havoline-SMB Strong Ice driver Jody Coseteng captured the coveted National Touring Car Championship plum at the close of the 2004 PCSO Grand Prix at the Batangas Racing Circuit recently.

Coseteng placed second to Petron Ultron's Kookie Ramirez in the morning action but came back in blazing form to rule the final race of this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines.

Coseteng held off Ramirez going into the last two laps to wrap up the 12-lap race in 26 minutes 24.839 seconds, or just 0.034 seconds ahead of Ramirez.

Rey Reyes of Autoklasse finished third in both races and captured the overall runner-up trophy in the National Touring Car Championship.

He likewise bagged the Class B crown over Dominic Bon and overall third placer Oscar Aguilar of Caltex Havoline.

Miguel Lazaro survived an exciting duel with archrival Renan Morales to clinch the National Junior Touring Car Championship and the Novice crown.

Caltex Havoline's Peewee Mendiola and Dahlia Guerrero shared third place honors in the NJTCC while Christian Aguilar of Caltex Havoline wound up fourth and third in the Novice division.

Sharing the spotlight was Miguel Lazaro who survived the exciting climax against archrival Renan Morales to clinch the National Junior Touring Car Championship and the Novice crown.

Caltex Havoline's Peewee Mendiola and Dahlia Guerrero shared third place honors in the NJTCC while Christian Aguilar of Caltex Havoline wound up third fourth in the Novice division.

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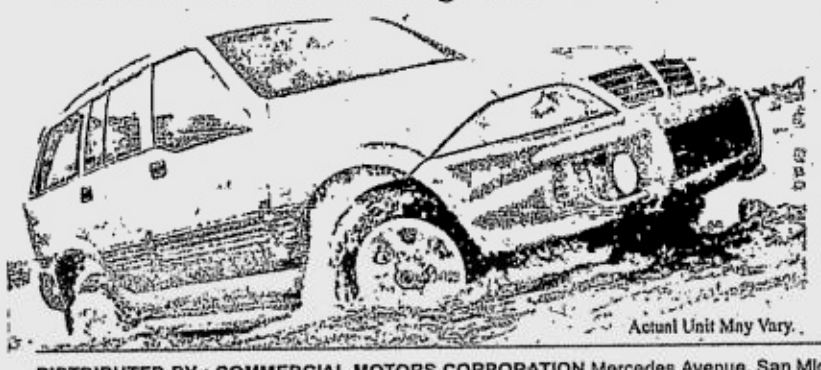

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Other outlets: Hall of Fame Festival Mall, Havoc Boutique Robinsons Pampanga, Island City Mall Tagbilaran City, Magic Dept. Store Nepomall Dagupan, Metro Gaisano (Ayala Center Cebu & Legazpi City), Olympic Village (Angeles, Ayala Cebu, Bacolod, Biñan, Dasmariñas, Metro Market! Market!, Park Square, Sta. Lucia East, Sta. Rosa, Recto, Robinsons Lipa and Robinsons Pampanga), Olympic World Alabang Town Center, The Athlete's Foot Tuluban and Victoria Plaza Davao.

THIS WEEK ON
NBA RPN

WATCH THE DRAMA UNFOLD AT THESE TIMES on RPN!

DEC. 13	ORLANDO MAGIC @ LA LAKERS	7:30 PM
DEC. 16	MIAMI HEAT @ WASHINGTON WIZARDS	7:30 PM
DEC. 19	PORTLAND BLAZERS @ DETROIT PISTONS	10:00 AM

MONDAYS, THURSDAYS AND SUNDAYS

sports shift
Time to shift.

Agojo leads Samsung Tour hopefuls

JAYVIE Agojo heads list of favorites.

CEBU—In-form Jayvie Agojo is expected to easily clinch a spot in the grand finals as she leads the cast for the seventh and final qualifying leg of the Samsung Amateur Tour which starts with the 72-hole men's championship division battle tomorrow (Tuesday, Dec. 14) at the exclusive Cebu Country Club here.

Agojo, the star of the Puerto Rico World Amateur team and who just posted a runaway win in the recent Manila Ladies Amateur, is entered in ladies Class A heavily favored due to the short 36-hole format.

Expected to challenge Agojo, set to join the Pepperdine University in the United States for the NCAA wars early next year, are national teammate Anya Tanpinco of Bacolod and jungolfer Kathleen Uy.

There are 150 registered entries who will be contesting the slots in eight different divisions: championship, Class A, B, C and D for men and Class A, B and C for ladies. Except for the championship, all the rest will be played on Thursday and Friday (Dec. 16-17).

The grand finals of the Samsung Tour also sponsorsed by Tokyo Tokyo, C-Lium Fiber, Gatorade, Philippine Airlines, adidas Taylor Made, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport, and Rogin-E will be played at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club on Feb. 8-11. Killer-Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite are media partners.

Eric Deen will be gunning for a third straight title in the men's championship against a tougher opposition this time.

Meanwhile, the organizing Professional Sports Management Group announced yesterday that Tagaytay Highlands and Tagaytay Midlands will host the Samsung Interscholastics on Jan. 22 to 24 next year.

Boy Blue Ocampo of PSMG said that the Tagaytay management has generously approved the weekend schedule to enable more students and schools to join the tournament which supplements the youth development program of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines.

The Tagaytay tourney is the other half of a two school-season events sponsored by Samsung to be held next year.

"Of course, the weekend schedule already has triggered a deluge of inquiries from various schools and we're now expecting a record attendance in Tagaytay," said Ocampo.

Thirty schools from all over Metro Manila competed in the last Interscholastics at the executive course of Valley.

IS Snipers knot URBL title series

SANTO Domingo, Ilocos Sur—The host Ilocos Sur Snipers closed out the game with a 9-0 run to turn back M. Lhuillier-Cebu, 85-76, in overtime yesterday and tie at 1-all the United Regional Basketball League (URBL) Finals at the Santo Domingo People's Center here.

Jeff Sanders, who led the Snipers with 20 points, sparked the crucial spurt in the extension which the Cebuanos forged behind Woodraw Enriquez, whose driving layup forged the 68-68 deadlock at the end of the regulation period.

The best-of-five championship series sponsored by adidas, Lactovitale, Pagcor and PCSO resumes Wednesday at the New Cebu City Coliseum, which will also host Game 4.

The game was still tied at 76 when Sanders drilled in a triple to install Ilocos Sur ahead for good, 79-76, with 1:26 remaining.

The Jewelers' woes started from there.

Bong Marata muffed his charities then fouled Sanders, who made it 80-76 with 25 seconds to go. When Enriquez missed a triple on the next play, Snipers skipper Allan Yu grabbed the rebound and quickly ran down the court for an unmolested layup, 82-76.

A technical foul slapped on Lhuillier coach Raul Alcoseba for vehemently protesting a noncall by the referees resulted in another free throw by Yu before Dondon Mendoza capped the Snipers' endgame salvo.

A Game Five, if necessary, will be played on Dec. 19 in Santo Domingo.

Meanwhile, the cause-worthy battle for third place between Harbour Centre-Pampanga and the Quezon Coco Huskers will be played Dec. 14 at the University of the Assumption campus.

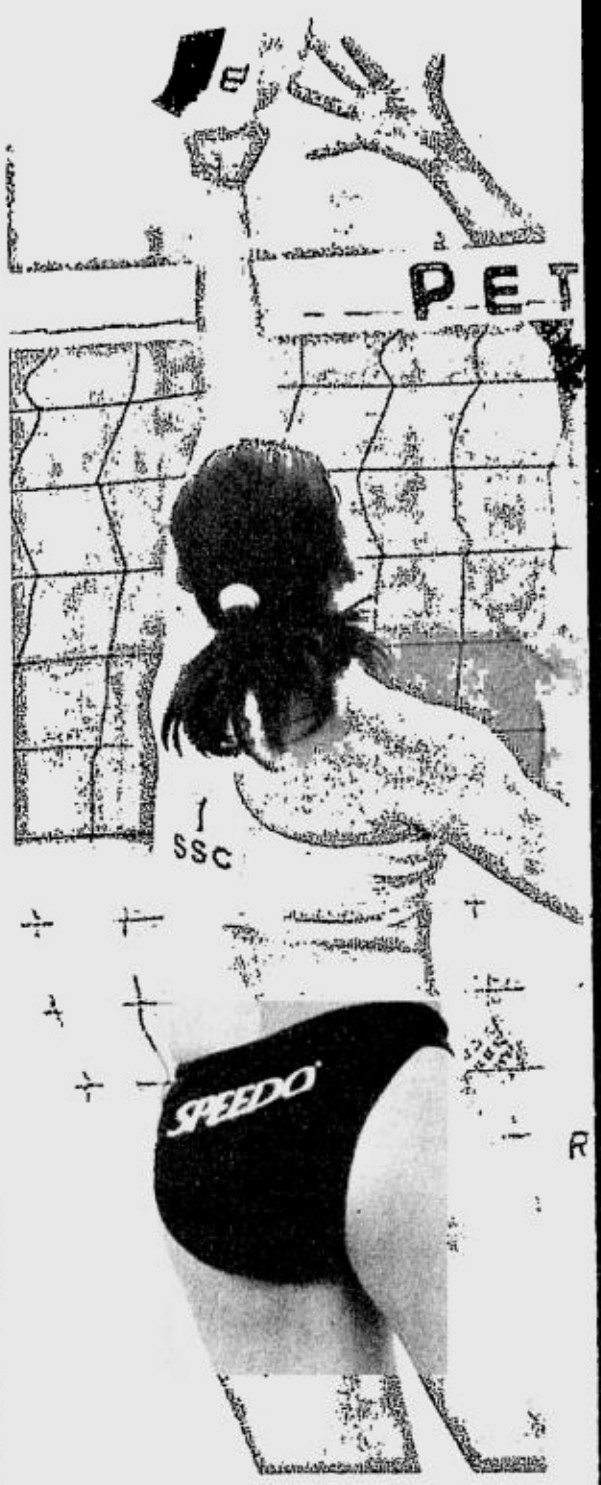
Proceeds from the said game will benefit victims of the recent typhoons that devastated Quezon and adjoining provinces.

The scores:

ILOCOS SUR 85—Sanders 20, D Mendoza 17, Manigo 10, Rauschmayer 9, Santa Cruz 9, Yu 8, Barbosa 8, Hardin 4, Cardel 0.

M. LHUILLIER 76—Bat-og 17, Laygo 17, Marata 13, Enriquez 7, Dacia 6, Lumantas 6, Ayling 5, Cañoneo 2, Smith 2, de Guzman 1, Rubi 0, L Garcia 0, Ocañada 0.

Quarters: 15-24, 39-40, 55-54, 68-68 (reg), 85-76 (OT).



MICHELLE Laborte (with glasses) blocks a spike of Arr
Beach Volleyball championship. The Navy tandem of L

Navy spikers beach volley

PHILIPPINE Navy spikers Michelle Laborte and Cecille Tabuena fended off the challenge of Philippine Army's Jennifer Bohawe and Patricia Siatan, 21-15, 21-13, yesterday to rule the fourth and final leg of the 2004 Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball Tournament at the Cantada Sports Center.

Using their better coverage of the sandcourt and the crushing kills by Laborte, the Navy ladies dominated the Siatan-Bohawe pair from start to finish, turning what was supposed to be a thrilling duel into a one-sided rout.

"Compared with our third leg victory in Subic, this is bigger and sweeter for us because it was achieved against such veteran stars of the beach volleyball circuit," said Tabuena, who like her partner Laborte is a former standout of the University of St. La Salle in Bacolod City.

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PMI clinches 6th victory

PHILIPPINE Maritime Institute roared to its sixth straight victory with a 79-43 demolition of Rizal Technological University yesterday in the 12th National Capital Region Athletic Association women's basketball tournament at the EAC gym.

Ruby Abad sizzled with 21 points for the Lady Admirals, who advanced to the semifinals along with La Salle-Manila (5-1).

Janice de Guzman chipped in 16, scoring eight as PMI took an early 19-8 lead.

The Lady Admirals hardly felt the absence of skipper Eileen de Jesus, who hurt her left ankle against La Salle-Dasmariñas last Tuesday.

In junior action, Colegio de San Lorenzo outclassed Polytechnic University of the Philippines, 96-37, to improve to 3-2.

San Beda-Alabang won over Emilio Aguinaldo College, 118-25, while Olivarez College downed RTU, 72-34.

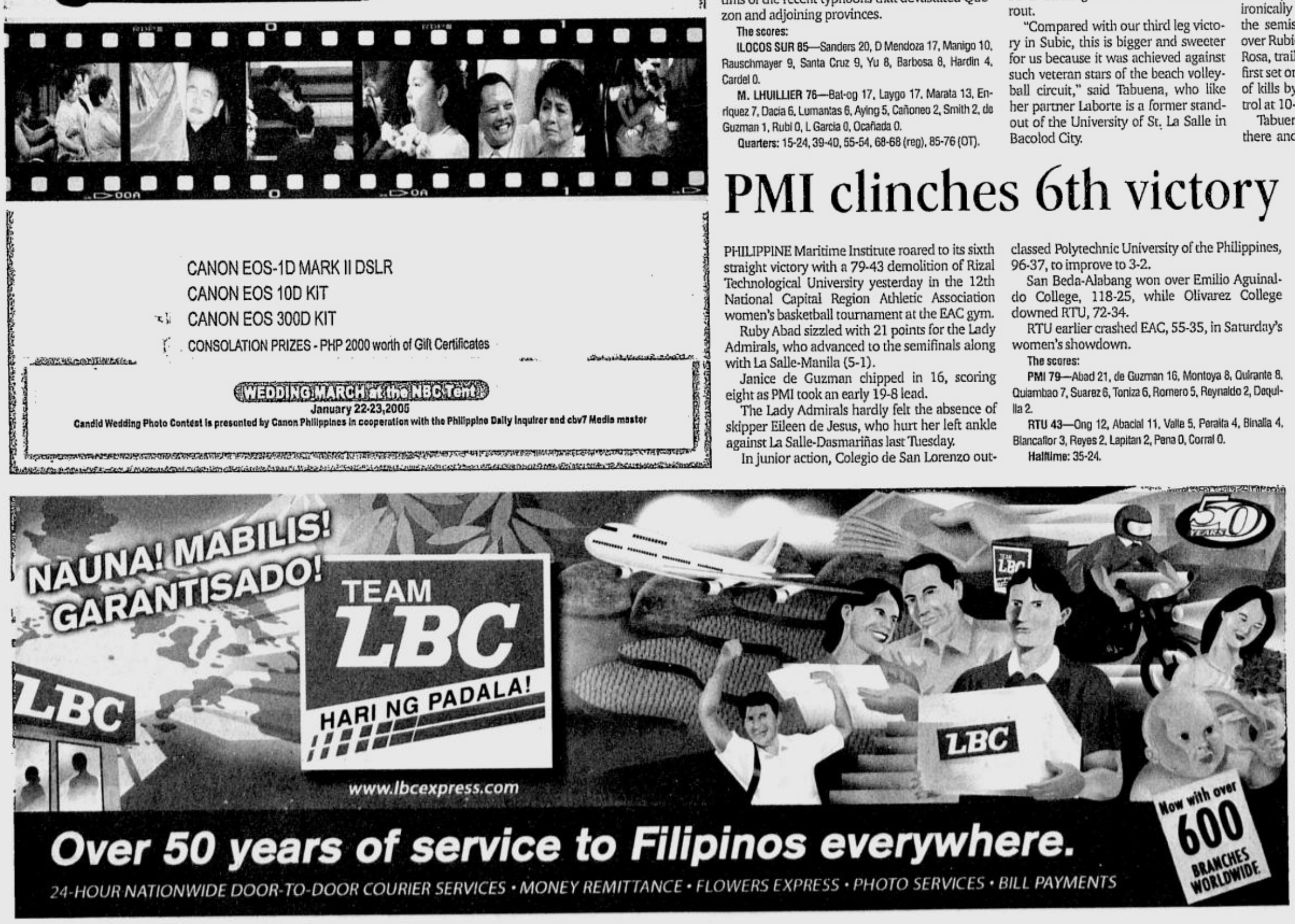
RTU earlier crashed EAC, 55-35, in Saturday's women's showdown.

The scores:

PMI 79—Abad 21, de Guzman 16, Montoya 8, Quirante 8, Quiambao 7, Suarez 6, Toniza 6, Romero 5, Reynaldo 2, Dequilla 2.

RTU 43—Ong 12, Abacial 11, Valle 5, Peralta 4, Binalla 4, Blancaflor 3, Reyes 2, Lapitan 2, Pena 0, Corral 0.

Halftime: 35-24.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Kings flog Pacers in OT; LA Lakers sink Clippers

INDIANAPOLIS—Chris Webber had 26 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, and Mike Bibby added 21 points to help the Sacramento Kings hold off the Indiana Pacers, 97-92, in overtime Saturday night.

"They made us take quick shots and we played a little selfish at times," Webber said. "But we have to play on a more consistent level to be as good as we want to be."

Indiana had six players reach double figures, but Reggie Miller missed his last eight shots and the Pacers lost their seventh straight.

Sacramento's Brad Miller, an All-Star with Indiana, sealed the win with four free throws in the final nine seconds of overtime.

Sacramento has won six of its last seven games.

Austin Croshere led the Pacers with 21 points—13 in the fourth quarter and overtime. Jeff Foster added 11 points and 18 rebounds.

In Houston, Michael Finley scored a season-high 26 points and led a huge third-quarter charge as Dallas handed Houston its biggest loss of the season, 102-78.

Finley, recovering from a sprained right ankle, hit five of his eight 3-point attempts. He made four straight 3-pointers in a 23-8 run in the third quarter.

Dirk Nowitzki added 22 points and 14 rebounds for Dallas, and Tracy McGrady led Houston with 15 points.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Pau Gasol scored 20 points and Shane Battier hit four free throws in the final 20 seconds to lead Memphis past Detroit, 72-68.

Battier broke a 68-68 tie with two free throws with 19.4 seconds remaining, and added two more with 12 seconds left to complete the scoring. Detroit's Rasheed Wallace missed a pair of 3-pointers and had another shot blocked by Gasol in the final seconds.

Wallace had 22 points for the Pistons, and Richard Hamilton scored 18.

In Chicago, rookie Ben Gordon scored a career-high 31 points, 16 in the fourth quarter to help Chicago hold off a furious Minnesota comeback and hold on for a 99-88 triumph.

Minnesota trailed by 24 in the second quarter and rallied within one in the final period but couldn't get the lead because Gordon scored 10 straight points for the Bulls at one juncture, hitting a pair of 3-pointers.

Kirk Hinrich added 19 points for the Bulls. Kevin Garnett had 16 points and 21 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 34 points, and San Antonio had its best shooting night of the season en route to a 116-97 route of Cleveland.

The Spurs shot 84 percent from the floor in the first half to take a 69-45 lead, and finished the night at 66 percent.

Cleveland's Drew Gooden scored a season-high 28, and LeBron James added 23 points and 10 assists.

In Atlanta, Richard Jefferson scored 19 of his 21 points in the second half, and Travis Best, starting in place of Jason Kidd, had a season-high 21 for New Jersey as the Nets tripped the Hawks, 95-90.

Kidd, who played 17 minutes as he continues to recover from a knee injury, hit five of six free throws in the final 33.4 seconds and finished with nine points.

Antoine Walker led the Hawks with 25 points and 13 rebounds.

In Seattle, Paul Pierce scored 22 points and Gary Payton had 21 against his former team to help Boston beat Seattle, 98-84, and snap a three-game losing streak.

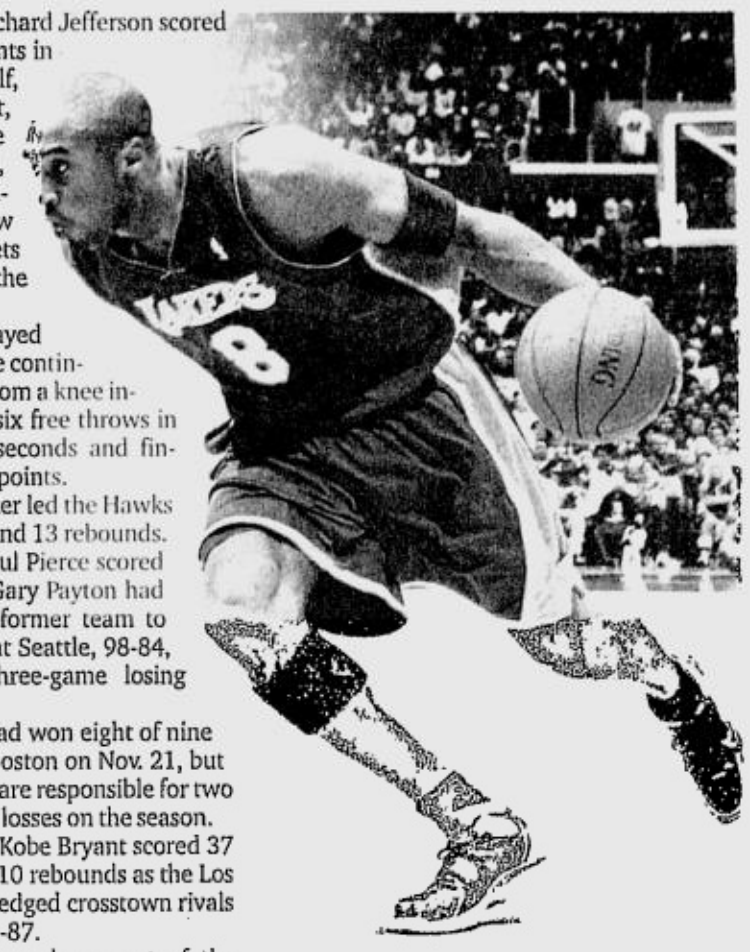
The Sonics had won eight of nine after losing in Boston on Nov. 21, but now the Celtics are responsible for two of Seattle's four losses on the season.

Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 37 points and had 10 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers edged crosstown rivals the Clippers, 89-87.

The game was close most of the way, with Bryant helping pull it out by scoring nine points in a late 4:39 span.

Bryant missed making it three triple-doubles in a row, finishing with five assists. Lamar Odom added 19 and 12 rebounds for the Lakers. *AP*

...ny's Jennifer Bohawe during the Petron Ladies ...aborte and Cecille Tabuena won. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO



KOBE Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers drives with the ball against the Los Angeles Clippers at the Staples Center. Bryant torched the Clippers with 37 points. AFP

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...Laborte won P10,000 ...r their championship ...n and Bohawe settled ... beach volleyball tour- ...Petron and organized ...al volleyball team star

...ment has grown by ...s from its humble be- ...r to one of the major, ...olleyball meets in the ...aid Abundo, who is a ...oner of the Philippine ...on.

...king Navy duo, which ...nter rough-sailing in ... a slim 21-17 victory ...on and Josie May dela ...awe and Siatan in the ...e at 2-0 before a string ...te brought them con-

...ed up the pace from ...l places with Laborte for the booming spikes as Navy soared to a 16-12 lead.

Bohawe retaliated with two service winners as Army threatened at 14-16 but that was the best that they could muster in the first set as errors by Siatan near the net allowed the Navy belles to claim the victory at 21-15.

Bohawe and Siatan, former stalwarts of the many-time collegiate champion San Sebastian College, started the second set scorching, grabbing a 7-3 advantage, that, however, disappeared quickly when Laborte and Tabuena took turns at ramming down uncontested kills inside the Army's court to gain the lead at 15-10.

"They are faster and stronger. They deserve the title, *bawi na lang kami* (we'll try to get back) next year)," said Bohawe, who is also a former national volleyball team member.

LABORTE and Tabuena receive their trophy and cash prize from Tisha Abundo, organizer of the Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball, and Boy Cantada, president of the Cantada Sports Center where the fourth and final leg of the event was held. ERNIE U SARMIENTO

'Babe' Boomer signs with Sox

ANAHEIM, California—David Wells made the surprising decision to sign with the Boston Red Sox, Carl Pavano picked the New York Yankees and Roger Clemens narrowed his choices to the Houston Astros or retirement.

While the Yankees' efforts to sign Pavano moved forward, there might be a hitch in New York's deal with Jaret Wright, with the team still evaluating the results of his physical.

Wells, a loud lefty known for his unabashed love of Yankees history, agreed to an $8 million, two-year contract with Boston that could be worth up to $18 million over two years, a deal subject to Wells, also nicknamed Boomer, passing a physical.

It will be sort of a Babe Ruth reverse commute for Wells, who spent four seasons with the Yankees during two tours. In June 1997, he even wore a Ruth cap from 1934 during a game against Cleveland.

Clemens, 42, said last week that he was leaning toward retirement and will make his decision between Jan. 5-20. *AP*

Talk 'N Text's new tower of power

...EN Talk 'N Text sent Mark ...n to a US training camp to ...k on his game, nobody ...w how much impact that ...e meant until the new PBA ... on got going.

...ith the suspension of Asi ...lava in the wake of the recent ...ham crackdown, Telan be- ...e a major cog in the Phone ... campaign in the Gran Mata- ...PBA Philippine Cup.

...NT coach Joel Banal said the ...sion to send Telan and ...lava in the off-season to at- ...l a big-man's training camp ... Sarasota, Florida, proved ...iful.

...hile Taulava maintained his ...P form after the US trip, ...n turned out to be a pleasant ...rise for his team.

"The best thing that happened to Mark since that camp is that his confidence grew," Banal observed. "Playing with the Americans in Florida helped him to jump a couple of levels up (in his playing style). That's why he's better now."

His dramatic transformation saw him clinching the PBA Press Corps Player of the Week right in Week One—with Taulava still in the TNT lineup.

When Taulava "disappeared" from the TNT lineup, Telan really shone, leading the Phone Pals to an amazing 7-1 run as the team's new star big man.

Although a minor injury sidelined him for a couple of games, he maintained eye-popping career numbers when he came back.

Overall Telan is averaging 16.7 points (second behind teammate Willie Miller) and a team-best 8.9 rebounds. He is fourth in the league in field goal percentage (54.3), third in block shots (1.8), and is one of only three players in the league to score double figures in all games in the Philippine Cup.

Need Telan prove more?

"A lot of people think he was just good for one or two games, but he's been consistent," Banal gushed. "That's where you separate the great players from the good players. The great players can do it night in and night out."

And that's exactly what the "new" Telan is doing.

...ompton a gem for Montaña

...mine W. Payo

...XPERIENCE and compo- ...Alex Compton have kept ...ntaña Jewels shining in ...l Open Championship.

...Jewels are on top with an 8- ...d following the acquisition ...pton, whose leadership and ...nd play have given Mon- ...ough staying power to sur- ...se games.

... here for the leadership he provides for the team," said coach Robert Sison of Compton, the league's Player of the Week. "But I also expect him to step up when the game is on the balance. His ability to score is unquestionable."

Indeed, the former pro cager has recently delivered big offensive games. After a 26-point performance against Welcoat, the sweet-shooting Compton again drilled a game-high 21 points, including 10 in the fourth quarter, for a 74-63 win over Granny Goose on Thursday.

Last Saturday, Compton also showed his defensive worth with a steal off JP Alcaraz in the dying seconds to spoil Toyota Otis-Letran's final play and secure a 57-54 victory.

The 30-year-old Compton is the league's third-best scorer (14.4 points per game) and free-throw shooter (89.3 percent). He is seventh overall in assists at 3.3 apg.

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2003 Toyota Corolla GLi M/T	545,000.00	18,754.00	5,626.00	13,128.00
2004 Toyota Corolla Altis J M/T	655,000.00	22,262.00	6,679.00	15,583.00
2004 Toyota Revo SR M/T	830,000.00	19,954.00	5,986.20	13,968.00
2002 Mitsubishi Lancer GLXI A/T	490,000.00	17,001.00	5,100.00	11,901.00
2003 Mitsubishi Adventure Sport	645,000.00	15,869.68	4,760.90	11,108.77
2003 Mitsubishi Pajero A/T	1,200,000.00	28,073.00	8,422.00	19,651.00
1999 Nissan Exalta M/T	360,000.00	12,855.00	3,857.00	8,999.00
1999 Nissan Frontier 4x4 A/T	535,000.00	13,319.00	3,996.00	9,323.00
2000 Nissan Patrol 3.0 4x4 A/T	1,200,000.00	28,073.00	8,422.00	19,651.00
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Klitschko stops Williams in 8th

A FALLEN Williams seems to be paying homage to Vitali Klitschko (right) in the third round. AP

Keeps WBC heavyweight belt

LAS VEGAS—Vitali Klitschko staked his claim to being the true heavyweight champion Saturday, knocking Danny Williams down four times and giving him a savage beating before finally stopping him in the eighth round.

He then dedicated the win to democracy in his native Ukraine, where he planned to head Sunday to support the opposition presidential candidate.

"I feel this was the best performance of my career," Klitschko said. "But this victory was not just for me, but also for democracy in the Ukraine."

Klitschko retained his WBC heavyweight title in a lopsided fight that left Williams bloodied, battered and barely able to see.

Williams was taken to a local hospital for a brain scan after the fight, while Klitschko also went to have X-rays taken of his swollen hands to see if they were broken from hitting Williams on the head so many times.

Williams remained game even after the final knockdown in the eighth round, getting up at the count of nine and wanting to continue. But referee Jay Nady decided he had taken enough punishment and waved the fight to a close at 1:26 of the round.

"I feel I am the real heavyweight champion," Klitschko said. "I'm willing to fight anybody."

Klitschko, who owns just one of the three major heavyweight titles, made a case for being the best of the three champions in a dominating effort against a game but completely outclassed challenger.

Klitschko did something Mike Tyson couldn't do against Williams, knocking him down in the first round and giving him such a beating that Williams couldn't come back as he did in his upset win over Tyson.

Williams tried his best, plodding after Klitschko in the third round, but he rarely got inside the 2.01-meter (6-foot-7) champion's stiff jab and took a pounding from his right hand.

"My strategy was to use my reach because I knew he would try to get close to me," Klitschko said.

There had been questions about Klitschko's stamina and his tendency to cut around his eyes, but he had no problems with either in a fight he dominated from the opening bell.

With his brother, Wladimir, working the corner, Klitschko swarmed all over Williams in the opening round, landing 52 punches to only four for the challenger. He knocked Williams down with 37 seconds left in the round and hit him almost at will.

Klitschko wore an orange flag on his trunks, signifying his support for Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko. Others in the crowd waved Ukrainian flags and orange flags, the color of their candidate's campaign.

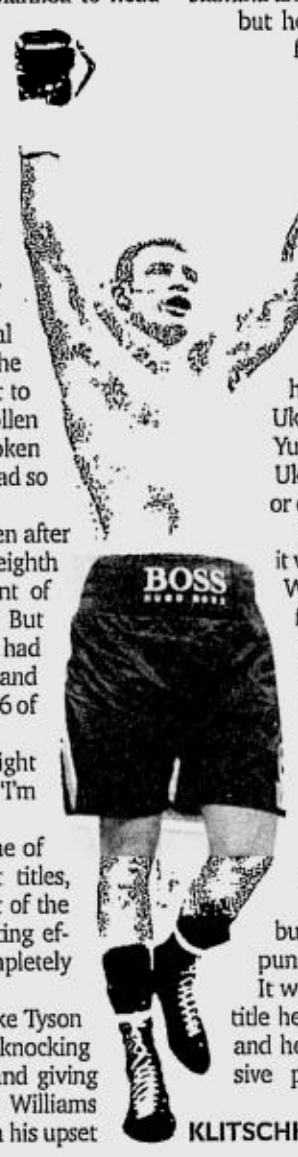
Klitschko's style was unorthodox, but it was devastatingly effective. And, while Williams lasted through nearly eight full rounds, there was no disputing the damage he inflicted on Williams, a journeyman British heavyweight of little repute until he stopped Tyson in the fourth round of their fight in July.

Williams was cut on his right eyelid in the first round, his face was puffed up, and both his eyes were nearly closed from the sheer volume of punches landed by Klitschko.

"He didn't hit as hard as Mike Tyson but he was more consistent with his punches," Williams said.

It was the first defense by Klitschko of the title he won against Corrie Sanders in April, and he continued a recent streak of impressive performances that began when he fought well against Lennox Lewis before losing on cuts after six rounds.

The fight pitted two big men, with Klitschko weighing 250 pounds (113 kilograms) and Williams weighing 270 lb (122 kg), despite giving away six inches in height to the champion. Williams had wanted to get inside on Klitschko, but Klitschko would not allow him anywhere close. *AP*



KLITSCHKO AP

Green bags Australian Masters

MELBOURNE, Australia—Richard Green won a three-way playoff for the Australian Masters here Sunday with a birdie putt on the first extra hole against Greg Chalmers and David McKenzie.

Peter Lonard, trying to become the first player to win the Australian "Slam"—the Open, PGA and Masters in one season—dropped three shots on the last two holes to close with a 72 and finish in a share of eighth place at 13-under.

Lonard was aiming for a fourth win in as many weeks after winning the New South Wales Open, Australian Open and last week's Australian PGA Championship.

Green fired a final-round 67 to add to earlier rounds of 69-67-68 and finish at 17-under 271 alongside McKenzie and Chalmers, who closed with a 65 at Melbourne's Huntingdale Golf Club.

McKenzie, who had. a two-stroke lead overnight, needed a birdie on his last hole for an even final round and to join Green and Chalmers in the playoff.

Green then set up his first win in Australia with an approach shot to within a meter of the pin on the first playoff hole—the 18th—and tapped in a simple putt.

It was Green's first title since the 1997 Dubai Desert Classic—which also involved a three-way playoff against Greg Norman and Ian Woosnam—although he'd placed second three times this season on the European Tour.

Two-time Australian Masters champion Brad Hughes, who held the lead briefly with three holes remaining, dropped two shots at the 18th and finished in a share of fourth place at 16-under 272.

Corey Pavin, the 1995 US Open champion, closed with a 67 and finished two shots behind the leaders in seventh place at 15-under. *AP*

V-LEAGUE

Lady Archers repulse FEU, share No. 2 slot with PSC

GAMES TOMORROW (*Rizal Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—Lyceum vs San Sebastian
5 p.m.—PSC vs Letran

DE LA SALLE University overcame a sluggish and erratic start to trounce Far Eastern University, 25-22, 25-23, 25-15, yesterday to gain a share of second place in the Shakey's V-League second conference at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

The Lady Archers are now tied at 3-1 with the Philippine Sports Commission squad.

Michelle Carolino led the Taft-based belles' attack with 14 points, including eight on spikes and five on blocks as the Lady Archers notched their third straight win after an opening-day loss to pacesetting University of Santo Tomas.

In the other game, Lyceum stunned Letran, 25-20, 26-28, 25-16, 27-25, to post its first win after starting the conference with consecutive setbacks.

The Lady Knights took their second loss against the same number of wins.

The Lady Archers, the back-to-back UAAP titlists, had to fight from two-point deficits and work hard in the first two sets as Far Eastern U, which dominated the sport in the late '90s, seized control behind the power-hitting Ailyn Ege and Ruby May Rovira in this tournament sponsored by Shakey's Pizza.

However, the efforts of Rovira proved not enough to sustain FEU's momentum as the Lady Archers recovered in time to still take the first two sets.

Then the Lady Archers poured it on in the third set behind Carolino, Desiree Hernandez and skipper Maureen Penetrante.

Hernandez, the 2003 UAAP MVP, backed Carolino up with nine points, five coming off blocks, while Penetrante and Carissa Gotis added eight apiece for La Salle.

FEU, which battled back from two sets down to sweep the next three and repulse Lyceum last Thursday, reeled to its third loss against a win in the event co-presented by Dunkin Donuts, HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives, Smart and PLDT with Mikasa and Accel as official volleyball and outfitter, respectively.

Ege paced her Morayta-based squad with 12 points while Rovira chipped in nine.

Unintimidated Monty surges into Target lead

THOUSAND OAKS, California—Colin Montgomerie passed a big test when he overcame obnoxious fans and a pairing with Tiger Woods to post a 4-under 67 and take a two-shot lead in the Target World Challenge on Saturday.

Montgomerie was hardly intimidated playing with the tournament host, needing only four holes to put four shots between them on the leaderboard.

And when Jay Haas made a charge into the lead, the 41-year-old Scot responded with a 4-iron into 8 feet for eagle on the par-5 16th and a 9-iron into 8 feet for another birdie on the 17th to finish at 13-under 200.

"There's no satisfaction beating any player," Montgomerie said. "The satisfaction comes from seeing your name on the top of the leaderboard."

Sweeter yet would be seeing it there on Sunday afternoon, having Woods hand him the trophy and cashing the $1.25-million check, the fourth-largest payout.

Woods recovered from a terrible start—3 over after four holes—with a birdie-par-birdie finish for a 69 that left him two shots behind along with Haas (67) and Jim Furyk, who birdied five of his last six holes for a 67.

Miguel Angel Jimenez had the low round of the day at 66 and was another shot behind.

Montgomerie enjoyed the warmth of southern California and the reception from the fans, but not all of them. One man cheered loudly when he missed a birdie at the 12th, and the Scot glared.

"That was uncalled for," Woods said, who had security talk to the fan.

Asked about it later, Monty brushed it off. He was more excited about his play.

Montgomerie is in good position to win his first stroke-play title in the United States.

The Target World Challenge doesn't count in the record books, although Montgomerie surely would take satisfaction out of beating Woods, Vijay Singh and the rest of the elite, 16-man field at Sherwood Country Club.

"It's obviously a big mistake he invited me in the first place," Montgomerie said with a laugh.

And given his history being paired with Woods in stroke play—a drubbing at the '97 Masters, a three-hole playoff loss in Germany two years ago—Monty showed he was headed in the right direction.

"If you had said I would shoot 67, I would have walked home—well, not home, but to the hotel," he said. "If you would tell me I'll shoot 67 tomorrow, I'll walk to the airport."

Woods probably wanted to walk home to Florida after his start. He three-putted for bogey on No. 1, missing from 2 feet for par. He left a shot in the bunker at No. 3 and took double bogey. He three-putted for bogey on No. 4.

"There were a lot of holes left," Woods said. "I had been playing well all week, and I figured I might as well do what I had been doing, and not play hockey on the greens." *AP*

COLIN Montgomerie of Scotland tees off on the second hole during the third round of the sixth annual Target World Challenge golf tournament. REUTERS

WOODS: Two shots down. REUTERS

Manipol rules Journal Ladies X'mas fun run

MERCEDITA Manipol topped the field in overwhelming fashion in the 1st Women's Journal Ladies Open Christmas fun run yesterday at the Rajah Sulayman Park in Malate, Manila.

The 24-year old Manipol, a native of Carmen, San Agustin, Romblon, and being groomed as one of the country's top middle-distance runners, led the pack halfway through the 5K event before unleashing her second wind going home for the win in the tournament organized by Green Bucks Entertainment with Globe Girlfriends Club as major sponsor.

Manipol, bronze medalist in the 10,000-meter event of the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games, submitted a time of 19 minutes and 54 seconds in topping the field that also included 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEA Games marathon gold medalist Cristabel Martes and 2001 Milo National champion Liza Yambao.

Martes, still undergoing therapy for her injured hamstring, finished second with a time of 20:19, while Yambao came in third just 40 seconds behind.

"*Pauwi na sana ako sa probinsiya* (I was supposed to go home to the province)," said the slim 5-foot-1 Manipol, a graduate of the University of the East-Caloocan.

"*Pero nabinbin muna dahil sa* schedule *ng* training. Timing *naman at nasabihan kami na may* tournament, *kaya sunama na ako sa grupo* at least part *ng ensayo namin ito*. (But the plan was shelved because of my training schedule. It just so happened that we were told about this tournament so I joined as part of my training.)"

"*Ngayon may pamasko na ako at may pasalubong pa para kina nanay at tatay* (Now I have something to take home for my parents for Christmas)," she added.

Women's Journal publisher Boyet Antonio along with representatives of Globe and other tournament backers handed down the P15,000 cash to Manipol. Martes and Yambao received P10,000 and P5,000, respectively.

The top three finishers also received Nike shoes and gift packs. Separate gift packs from sponsoring Enervon Prime, Purefoods Chunks and Drysdale Juice were awarded to the top 10 runners.

"*Masakit pa 'yung* injury *ko kaya ang* instruction *sa akin ni* coach *huwag kong biglain* (My injury still hurts that's why I was instructed by my coach to take it slowly)," said Martes, part of the so-called GTK Army who's expected to lead the country's championship campaign in the 2005 Manila SEAG.

A modest number of participants saw action in the meet, but the presence of some of the country's finest runners like SEAG veteran Hazel Madamba and UAAP campaigners from University of Santo Tomas and La Salle were enough to stir the crowd that gathered in the stretch of Manila's famous seawall.

"Winning is not everything," said the 41-year-old Wenesa Balandra, the oldest participant in the event.

Balandra finished last in the race but didn't mind.

"I just want to be a part of anything that has to do with sports," she explained.

PRESIDENTIAL GOLD CUP

Empire King by a nose

By Edwin Villanueva
Contributor

EMPIRE King reserved just enough strength down the stretch to win the 32nd Presidential Gold Cup race by the slimmest of margins last night at the Santa Ana Park.

And the heartbreak kid turned out to be West Bound, who, for the second straight year, came up short again in the country's most prestigious race.

Empire King barreled ahead entering the home turn and was up by two lengths on Red Star Rising and Lyonnais when West Bound suddenly charged hard on the outside to force a photo finish.

The jampacked crowd roared when the official result was flashed showing Empire King hitting the wire first, just a nose ahead of the hard-luck West Bound.

"*Kundisyon na kundisyon ito. Buti nanalo* (He is in peak form. It's good he won)," said Jeffrey Ladiana, Empire King's regular pilot, who was sweating profusely after the 2,050-meter journey. "*Magandang pamasko itong panalo sa akin* (This win is a nice Christmas gift for me)."

The victory by the Sandy Javier-bred galloper—a huge follow-up to his Marho Breeders' Cup Colt Mile win two weeks ago—was worth P1.5 million for the Lee Stable.

REIGNING: Empire King (right) with Jeffrey Ladiana aboard pips West Bound at the finish. RUDY ESPERAS

West Bound, ridden by Eldy Salvador, got P500,000, mirroring his finish last year when he was edged by Red Star Rising, who came in third this time for P250,000.

"*Akala ko umabot eh. Di bale hanga pa rin ako sa sakay ko* (I thought we made it. Still, I admire my horse a lot)," gushed Salvador.

Lyonnais arrived fourth for P125,000, then came War Hero, Cover Girl, Dandansoy, Paramount, Free Wind, Don Paolo and Moab.

Red Star Rising, bidding for a back-to-back triumph, rallied strongly from ninth place under Manolito Daquis and was ranging up right on Empire King but could not muster enough kick. The top choice owned by the Trillana family eventually ended up a length behind the second-favored Empire King.

The winner, a 3-year-old chestnut colt sired by Perfect Halo out of Carta Nueve, covered the seldom-used route in 2:12.6 (27.5-24.5-26.5-27-29).

Ladiana gave Empire King ample space at fifth in the early going as Moab carried the march with Don Paolo and Free Wind in tow.

Moab and Don Paolo faded at the far turn as Empire King whizzed by to take command even as Red Star Rising dug in along Lyonnais. West Bound also started to put his claim, setting the dramatic finish to the delight of fans who packed the Makati racetrack.

"*Akala ko wala nang kalaban pero nagulat ako biglang sumulpot si* West Bound (I thought there was no more rival to contend with so I was surprised when West Bound suddenly came into the picture)," added Ladiana.

ITT pro-am golf invt'l on; Pacto, Lascuña picked

CANLUBANG—The cream of the country's golf crop tees off today, chasing prizes ranging from cash to luxury cruises in the first ever Ideal Travel and Tours Invitational Pro-Am at the Canlubang North course here.

Antonio Lascuña and former Philippine Open champion Robert Pactolerin head a compact men's field slugging it out for the P50,000 top prize, while Juvic Pagunsan banners a stellar amateur field in the 36-hole event.

Pagunsan and World Amateur teammate Artemio Murakami will start the ball rolling in the first flight scheduled at 9 a.m. together with Tetsuo Ochi.

Concepcion Uri and Kurt Verano, chair and director, respectively, of ITT, will hit the ceremonial drives.

"I'm in shape despite the lack of tournaments," said Lascuña, who has won two major local events this year, including the rich The Country Club Invitational. "This will be a real battle because we have not been playing competitively."

Nine of the top 10 pros are in the field, save for Cassius Casas, the reigning Super Tour champ who begged off at the last minute due to a prior commitment.

Caloy Nival, Rey Alit and national coach Roger Retuerto lead the Senior event, which stakes P35,000 to the winner, even as the amateurs, some of them coming straight from the just-concluded 55th Fil-Am in Baguio, battle it out for a cruise package courtesy of the sponsoring Ideal Travel and Tours.

A three-hour island-hopping journey aboard a sleek, top-of-the-line Yamaha 41-foot yacht to swim, snorkel and fish in the open sea form part of the luxury cruise package for the amateur champion and his guests.

Cuppers Arcilla, Victorino head Baguio Open roster

DAVIS Cuppers Johnny Arcilla and Joseph Victorino lead 64 players seeing action in the First Baguio Open tennis tournament starting today at two venues in the summer capital.

Cash prizes totaling P250,000 will be up for grabs in the inaugural event jointly hosted by the Baguio Country Club, which is celebrating its centennial year, and the Baguio Tennis Club based in Burnham Park.

Action will be in singles and doubles, with the winner in each division receiving P40,000, according to organizers led by BCC general manager Anthony de Leon.

All participants, including first-round losers, are assured of prizes.

Also entered in the tournament are Rolando Ruel and Chiemel Mantua.

Lots will be drawn today to determine the first-round pairings.

Relocating the RMSC, Peping's lasting legacy

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

ONE OF Peping Cojuangco's major undertaking during his four-year term as Philippine Olympic Committee president will be the relocation of the outmoded Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (RMSC) to a place away from the hustle and bustle of crowded Manila. Clark Field in Angeles, Pampanga, is one of the highly favored relocation sites, but the 69-year-old Cojuangco had been concerned with reports about the presence of toxic waste in the former American military base, saying he would just look for another site if Clark Field is ruled out.

Over the years, many have suggested several other places, including the 400-hectare property owned by the government which houses the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City; the reclaimed portion of the Amari Coastal Bay, a portion of the vast Global City in Taguig, some other pollution-free locations such as the cities of Tagaytay, Baguio and Antipolo, or farther down south, Cebu and Bacolod, which are hosting some events in the SEA Games next year.

Looking back, the late Justiniano Montano Jr., former chair of the Games and Amusement Board, proposed in 1988 to then Sen. Jose Lina Jr. the need to replace the outmoded RMSC. In his letter to Lina, Montano said he was proposing the immediate construction of a complete national sports complex in a "high altitude and cool place like Tagaytay City." Montano, the first Asian and Filipino to head the prestigious World Boxing Council, said Philippine sports also needs dedicated foreign and local coaches and trainers who will work full time. He said no sports program will succeed with part-time sports officials and coaches."

Much earlier in the 1950s, officials of the defunct Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation also appealed to President Carlos Garcia to give the PAAF a grant transferring the old RMSC to an area in Quezon City that is now the Quezon City Memorial Circle. Sadly, their request was turned down.

A few years ago, reader Mauricio Austria also suggested Muntinlupa City as the site for the construction of a new sports complex ideal for staging international events. He said Muntinlupa City has never been flooded because it is some 300 meters above sea level and overlooks Laguna Bay and the beautiful rooftops at the Ayala Alabang subdivision, La Marea and Susana Heights.

"You have been writing for years about the need for a new sports complex," Austria said. "Well, do write some more, double your efforts in goading the people concerned with sports, including those people from Ayala and Filinvest, else the area be lost to professional squatters and/or shrewd land developers."

Austria said Muntinlupa is only some 20 kilometers away from Makati City and accessible via the South Superhighway and the Aguinaldo Highway. "Muntinlupa is a wide expanse of low rolling hills, ventilated by breeze from Laguna Bay on the east and the uplands of Batangas and Laguna on the south." Also known as the "Gateway to Calabarzon," Muntinlupa City is about an hour's drive to Tagaytay.

"The people of Muntinlupa would prefer to have a modern sports complex in their city rather than be known for the infamous tag of Muntinlupa Bilibid Prisons or "Munti Squatters City."

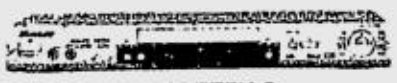
Another possible relocation site for the 70-year-old RMSC is the reclaimed portion of the Coastal Bay area. Covering 170 hectares, the proposed Coastal Bay sports complex will not only be a venue for local and international events but will also serve as a training center for talented Filipino athletes in their quest for that elusive Olympic gold.

Everybody knows the country is cash-strapped, but Cojuangco, with his clout and influence, can surely find ways to source out the funds to build a modern sports complex and leave a lasting legacy to the Filipino people.

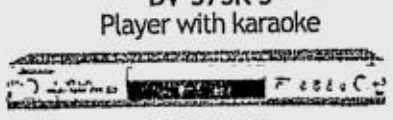
***

SAVE THE DISAPPEARING TAMARAWS. Reader Paul Mortel of Marikina City again wrote to remind us to help save the near-extinct tamaraws of Mindoro. "There are now only 187 tamaraws left from a high of 10,000 in 1900," he said some months back. "But in a recent Philippine Star column, Wilson Lee Flores wrote there are now only 20 left in Mindoro. Kindly clarify this with Environment Secretary Mike Defensor."

"The best homecoming present."



DV-575K-S
Player with karaoke



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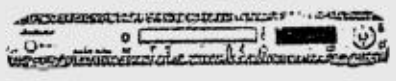

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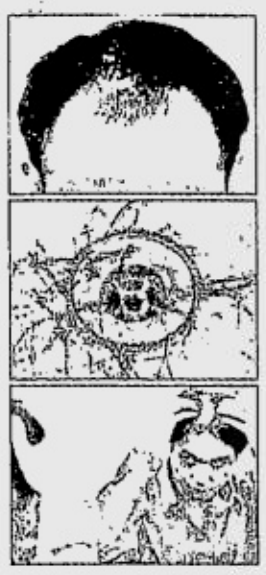

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Castañares wins WBF crown

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Dindo Castañares further boosted Filipino ring pride when he captured the World Boxing Foundation junior welterweight crown with a stirring fourth-round technical knockout of Colombian Guillermo Mosquera Saturday night at the Unitec Technological Institute gym here.

The 25-year-old Castañares, fighting out of the ALA Gym of Cebu, applied the pressure from the start and never allowed the Colombian—who arrived at the ring wearing a king's outfit and carried on the shoulders of his supporters—to find his range.

The RP junior welterweight champ peppered his Auckland-based rival with jabs and body shots in the fourth round and the Australian referee Ignatius Missailidis halted the fight with Mosquera down on his knees.

"He told me to please stop the fight, so that's just what I did," Missailidis told the INQUIRER in an interview at ringside.

The end came in one minute 47 seconds of the fourth.

The win came several hours before Filipino ring hero Manny Pacquiao stopped Fahsan 3K Battery of Thailand in Taguig in an impressive tune-up for his February rematch with IBF-WBA champ Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico.

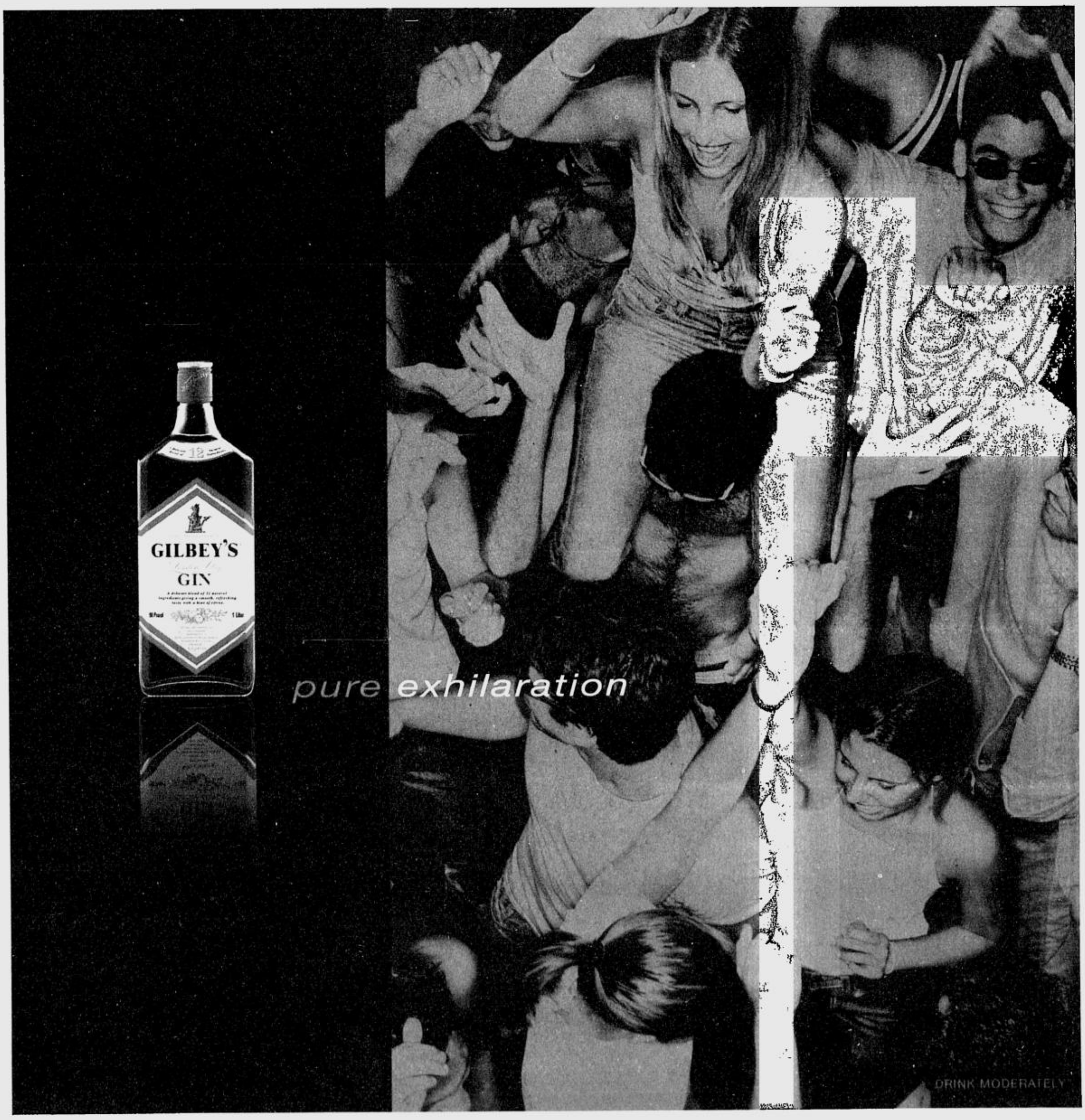
Never intimidated

It was also an early Christmas present for the Auckland-based Filipinos, who cheered for the Inayawan, Cebu-raised Castañares.

"I was never intimidated by his antics," said Castañares in Filipino after receiving his championship belt from WBF president Mich Croucher. "I came prepared and carried out my fight strategy."

Castañares, nicknamed "Diesel" due to his extraordinary stamina, announced he would marry his girlfriend from Cebu after the victory.

Promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani, who accompanied Castañares here with trainer Danny Bactol, said the new champ is willing to take on anybody in his first defense.



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MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

A33

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Don't miss your favorite TV shows!
Check out today's Inquirer TV Guide in the Entertainment section
Happy Viewing!

Why businesswoman is suing Annabelle Rama

By Marinel R. Cruz

"I DID this because Annabelle took advantage of me and I got tired of it. She was always asking for money," said businesswoman Shirley Quiambao, who filed a P3.5-million damage suit against former movie star Annabelle Rama for breach of contract.

Quiambao's daughter, Rochelle Sheree, signed a five-year management contract with Rama in August.

"I chose her to manage my daughter because I didn't know better. I thought she was a good person. *Matino naman siya* (She was all right) when I first talked with her," Quiambao told INQUIRER Entertainment on Saturday. "We were in my house when she made Rochelle sign a contract. The first thing she did was to ask for P100,000. She said it was for promotion. She even asked if we could go to my bedroom because she didn't want her friends to see her getting money from me."

INQUIRER tried to call Rama at her office, but she was "not in right now," according to the answering machine.

Fine print

Quiambao said the contract specified that Rama, as manager, be entitled to a 30-percent commission from Rochelle's earnings from show biz for five years. The contract is renewable at the option of Rama, she added.

The contract also required Rochelle to give a deposit, which would be utilized for training, workshop and personality development, she said.

"Annabelle didn't pay for any training or workshop," Quiambao pointed out. "I even paid for my daughter's trips to the salon. From the P100,000 that I gave her as deposit, Annabelle said she gave P10,000 to the reporters who attended the press con she hosted for Rochelle.

"I started to feel she was extorting money from me when she asked me to buy jewelry from her. The cheapest item I bought from her was worth P150,000," said Quiambao. "The jewelry totaled to P2 million, and she still wasn't happy. I

WHY/ A34

PDI PHOTO

ANNABELLE Rama: She asked for too much money, Shirley Quiambao (below left, with daughter) said.

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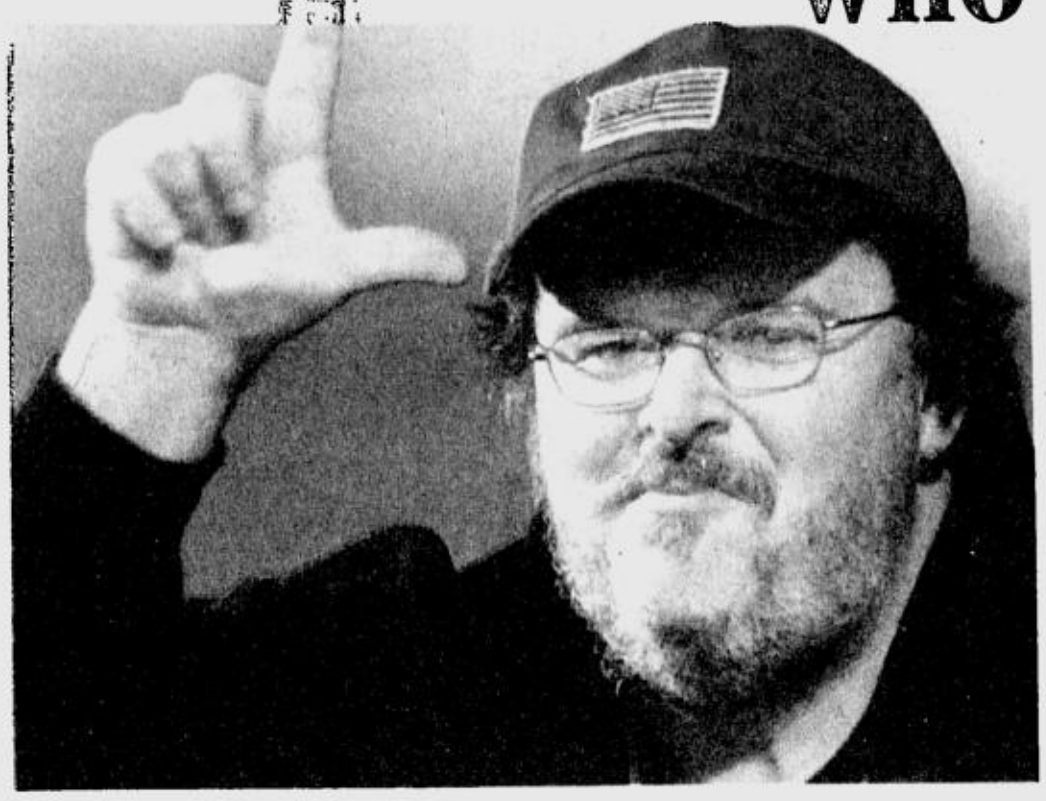

MOORE: I will give a polite speech if I win.

LOS ANGELES—Filmmaker Michael Moore is back on the campaign trail trolling for votes—this time, for the People's Choice Awards.

His documentary "Fahrenheit 9/11," an unlikely summer blockbuster, was one of the films selected in the "favorite movie" category of the annual populist prize ceremony. On Thursday he posted a letter on his website to mobilize fans to cast their ballots for the film, which was sharply critical of President George W. Bush and the war with Iraq.

Inspired

"Now, normally I wouldn't make a very big deal out of something like this," Moore wrote. He said he was inspired to make his appeal after a group of leading Republicans took out ads in USA Today and Daily Variety that he said included "a not-so-subtle threat to the Academy Awards voters that, in essence, said don't even *think* about nominating 'Fahrenheit 9/11' for Best Picture."

Moore said the People's Choice nomination proves the message of his film still resonates with people across the country, even though President Bush won reelection.

Other nominees

"Fahrenheit 9/11" attacked Bush's rationale for the war in Iraq and accused him and his administration of fostering fear for political gain. Moore spent the weeks before the election traveling across the country to urge Americans to vote Bush out of office.

In his letter, Moore said the movie still speaks "the truth about Iraq, Bush, terror and fear. The election has not altered or made irrelevant, unfortunately, a single one of these issues."

He added, "I promise, if we win, to give a nice and polite speech," a reference to the vitriolic speech he gave against the Iraq war last year when he accepted the Academy Award for best documentary for "Bowling for Columbine," a look at gun violence in America.

Other People's Choice nominees for favorite movie include "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," "The Incredibles," "Shrek 2" and "Spider-Man 2." Nominees were compiled from about 6,000 people across the country through the magazine Entertainment Weekly.

Moore also is pushing "Fahrenheit 9/11" for an Oscar in the best picture category, after saying he would not submit it in the lower-profile documentary field. *Reuters*

Why businesswoman is suing . . . From page A33

feel so bad that I kept buying from her. When I declined, she would insult me. She'd say '*Ang pangit ng alahas mo* (Your jewels are ugly).'

"She would always invite us to expensive restaurants, and ask me to foot the bill," Quiambao said of Rama, the controversial mother of beauty queen-actress Ruffa Gutierrez. "She said once Rochelle starts earning from show biz, *bawi-bawi na ako sa gastos* (my expenses would be recouped)."

P1-M loan

Quiambao said Rama asked P1 million from her, to co-produce a Valentine show at Dusit Hotel in 2005. But she didn't want to be a partner, she said, so she just issued three checks to cover the amount, saying she was merely loaning it to Rama. "She got angry. She sent text messages cursing me. She said if I didn't cooperate, she would not cast my daughter in the show."

The businesswoman said Rama even tried to borrow $12,000 from her husband in Los Angeles, where the Quiambaos are based, last Nov. 16. "My husband called me up. I was here at the time. He was very angry with me. That was when I really got mad at her. But because she didn't get what she wanted, Annabelle told me to look for another manager. She never mentioned the contract binding her and my daughter for five years. I never thought she'd do this."

Through lawyer Orlando Mendiola, Quiambao sent a letter to Rama informing her that a "stop payment order" on the checks Rama requested for the Valentine show had been issued.

"She responded by sending me a very nasty letter. Even my lawyer got shocked," said Quiambao. "She is uneducated. That's all I can say.

"I've lived in the States for 35 years and nobody has ever done [anything like] this to me. I have a very good life, good business and family," said Quiambao. "Suddenly this woman comes into my life and tries to ruin my finances. She left me with no choice but to [sue her]."

ROCHELLE Quiambao, the talent BOY CABRIDO

8 KEYS TO YOUR DIFFERENT INTERESTS

Only from PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Below the belt, straight to the crotch

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NOW that TV programs about the local show biz big scene have become so popular, it's instructive to compare them with their foreign counterparts, like "Entertainment Tonight" on the ETC channel.

The most obvious difference between local and foreign shows about the entertainment scene is the relative level and nature of the gossip, rumor, controversy and scandal they dispense.

Foreign shows also deal in gossip, but it's relatively tame. More to the point, it's reported in a nonincendiary way. Contrastingly, local programs about show business are pungent, confrontational and hit below the belt, straight to the crotch and armpit.

The operative thrust is "*kalkalin ang baho*," or to expose the smelly dirt about the lives of show biz celebrities—the smellier, the better.

This is because the people behind these shows believe that local viewers are perversely fascinated with celebrities' secret, sleazier side. This could be their way of evening up the score, out of envy for stars who look so much better and are so much more popular and richer than the madding crowd.

If the stars' private lives are shown to be just as sordid as anybody else's, that proves that even stars have feet of sullen clay—and that appears to be perversely consoling to the unenlightened viewer.

Trouble is, the big stars aren't involved in scandals on a weekly basis, so local shows concern themselves with the *baho* even of obscure starlets, has-beens, neverweres, and near unknowns.

The show's fetish for dirt has become so avid that it doesn't really matter to them if the purveyors of personal filth aren't well-known.

Thus, we have a weekly parade of publicity-hungry starlets (and their even more obscure relatives and hangers-on) who expose each other's *baho*, exchange insults, and even come to blows over the most picayune "controversies".

These tacky tiffs would never find airtime in foreign show biz programs, but they rate headlines here, and the starlets involved are goaded to vilify each other for many minutes on end, to give viewers their weekly fix of garbage.

The focus is no longer on celebrity, but on dirt. This gambit appeals to the least intelligent side of local viewers, and makes things worse because it implies that it's "in" to dish the dirt.

How unenlightened can we get? And, what "lessons" are we teaching our impressionable youth?

> The focus of local show biz shows is no longer celebrity but dirt. What are we teaching the impressionable youth?

Worse, local gossip shows have become so popular that the habits they form in viewers are no longer limited to show biz. People now want to get and dish the dirt on everybody.

Some of the exposés claim a moral or social dimension, but the way the attacks are staged makes it clear that most of them are self-serving, and dish the dirt purely for rating's sake.

That makes sense from a business point of view, but its negative moral, attitudinal and social effects are bad news all around.

Asian TV Awards

MORE than 1,500 Asian TV-film celebrities attended the 9th annual Asian Television Awards' gala ceremony in Singapore last Dec. 2. Out of 160 short-listed entries from 11 countries competing in 33 categories, three Filipinos won awards:

Michael V., Best Comedy Performance by an Actor, for "Bubble Gang," GMA-7. **Eula Valdez**, Best Drama Performance by an Actress, for "Maalaala Mo Kaya," ABS-CBN. And **Veronica Pedrosa**, Best News Presenter or Anchor, for "CNN Today," CNN International. "Bubble Gang" also won as Best Comedy Program.

South Korea's MBC won the Terrestrial Channel of the Year Award. Discovery Channel won the Cable and Satellite Channel of the Year Award. Entries were evaluated by 68 judges sitting on 10 juries convened across the region.

Each year, award categories are adjusted to reflect the region's programming and production trends. New categories this year are Best Single News Story/Report, Best Live Event Coverage, Best Reality Program, and Best Social Awareness Program (sponsored by Bloomberg Television). A total of 130 entries were received for the new categories.

Chair of judges **Jonathan Hallett** observes, "This year's entries clearly indicate Asia's commitment to improving production quality across the board, from prime time drama to children's programming.

"After the difficulties of the past few years, it's great to see the industry recovering. Local production is at an all-time high, and the experience gained under difficult circumstances has stood the industry in good stead."

Participating countries this year were Japan, China (including Hong Kong SAR), Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam.

EULA Valdez

MICHAEL V

(L-R) CAST members of "Ocean's Twelve"—George Clooney, Elliot Gould, Brad Pitt, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and Matt Damon—at the film's gala black-tie premiere in Hollywood REUTERS

Clooney, Pitt and gang made sequel just to hang out again

LOS ANGELES—It sounds like an impossible heist: With the clock ticking and important people demanding payback, Danny Ocean and his eclectic crew of con men have to make off with millions under intense scrutiny.

Can "Ocean's Twelve" work their criminal magic again?

It's the high-stakes question that sets in motion the sequel to the 2001 hit "Ocean's Eleven," but an even more pressing issue for studio Warner Bros., which is counting on the caper to steal the box-office crown after a series of high-profile studio misfires.

The movie, the biggest debut at US theaters this week, is expected to dominate the pre-Christmas weekend and top the $38.1-million opening by its predecessor, itself a sequel to the 1960 Rat Pack original headed by Frank Sinatra.

Just for fun

Heavily promoted by its ensemble cast, featuring George Clooney as Ocean, Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Matt Damon, "Ocean's Twelve" cost an estimated $110 million to make after the high-powered principals signed on for a fraction of their usual paychecks.

To hear them tell it, they did it in part for the sheer fun of hanging out in Italy, drinking wine at Clooney's Lake Como villa and enjoying an exchange of escalating practical jokes.

"We're expecting 'Ocean's Twelve' to be one of the biggest movies of the holiday season," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracking service Exhibitor Relations.

He notes that the spectacle of Hollywood's top talent so clearly enjoying themselves on screen "proved to be irresistible" for audiences three years ago.

Oscar-winning director Steven Soderbergh said the idea for a sequel struck him while on the road promoting the first movie in Europe. Other cast members said they saw it as a way to get the party started again.

"When we were doing the press tour for 'Ocean's Eleven,' we were all very adamant about not doing a sequel," Pitt said at a news conference in Rome. "We were having a beautiful dinner at 'La Bolognese' and a beautiful plate of buffalo mozzarella, and we all love Rome. Steven looked up and said 'I have an idea for the sequel,' and we all threw in our lots and agreed to do it, but it had to take place here."

It does—as well as skipping through Amsterdam, Paris and Monte Carlo as Clooney's character leads his hastily reassembled cast in a match of wits with a European master thief played by French actor Vincent Cassel.

Along the way, they also have to dodge Zeta-Jones as the conflicted cop with a luscious wardrobe. ("It's good to know that Europol agents wear red leather to work," the actress joked.)

Hopefully a hit

The North American box-office take for "Ocean's Eleven" was an impressive $184 million—not far off the $160-million plus interest that the characters in the sequel must find a way to quickly steal.

And part of the intended fun of the movie is the way that the caper is held up as a kind of mirror to the bigger confidence game of making a film.

Damon's character, for instance, lobbies for a bigger role this time out. Clooney's Ocean frets over whether he looks 50, and Julia Roberts, who arrived on the set pregnant with twins, sets out to dupe everyone into believing that she is in fact "Julia Roberts" the pregnant actress.

Warner Bros., a unit of Time Warner Inc., could use a breakout hit after a slow box-office start for "The Polar Express," its other major holiday release, and a mixed reception for "Alexander," Oliver Stone's three-hour epic.

So, if "Ocean's Twelve" pulls it off, could there be a Thirteen?

"I'm thinking musical," Pitt dead-panned when asked. *Reuters*

Sore monks protest film stars' show

COLOMBO—Angry Buddhists said Saturday they were prepared to go ahead with plans to self-immolate in protest over a music concert by Indian film stars that falls too near the death anniversary of a revered monk.

Sri Lankan police were deployed in force in the capital as Shahrukh Khan and other Bollywood film idols prepared for the concert titled "Temptation 2004" to be held later Saturday.

Yesterday was the death anniversary of Gangodawila Soma—who campaigned against conversions of Buddhists by Christians—and the monks want only religious activities over the weekend.

"We will not let this (concert) go ahead. We will march to the venue in the evening," said Rathmalane Seelawansa, a monk on his third day of a protest fast.

Monks are a powerful political force here because the majority of Sri Lankans are Buddhists.

Images of some Indian artists were burned by protesters on Saturday. *AP*

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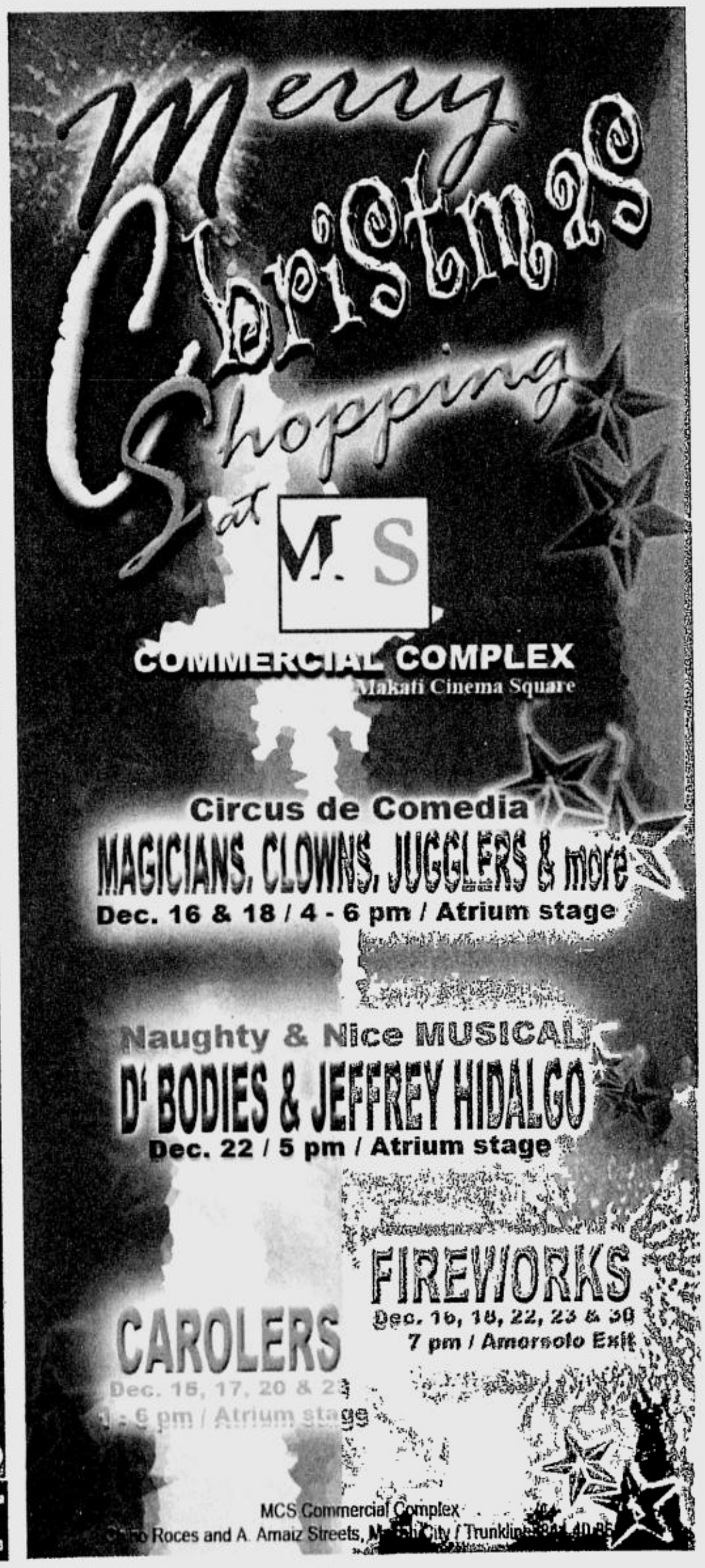

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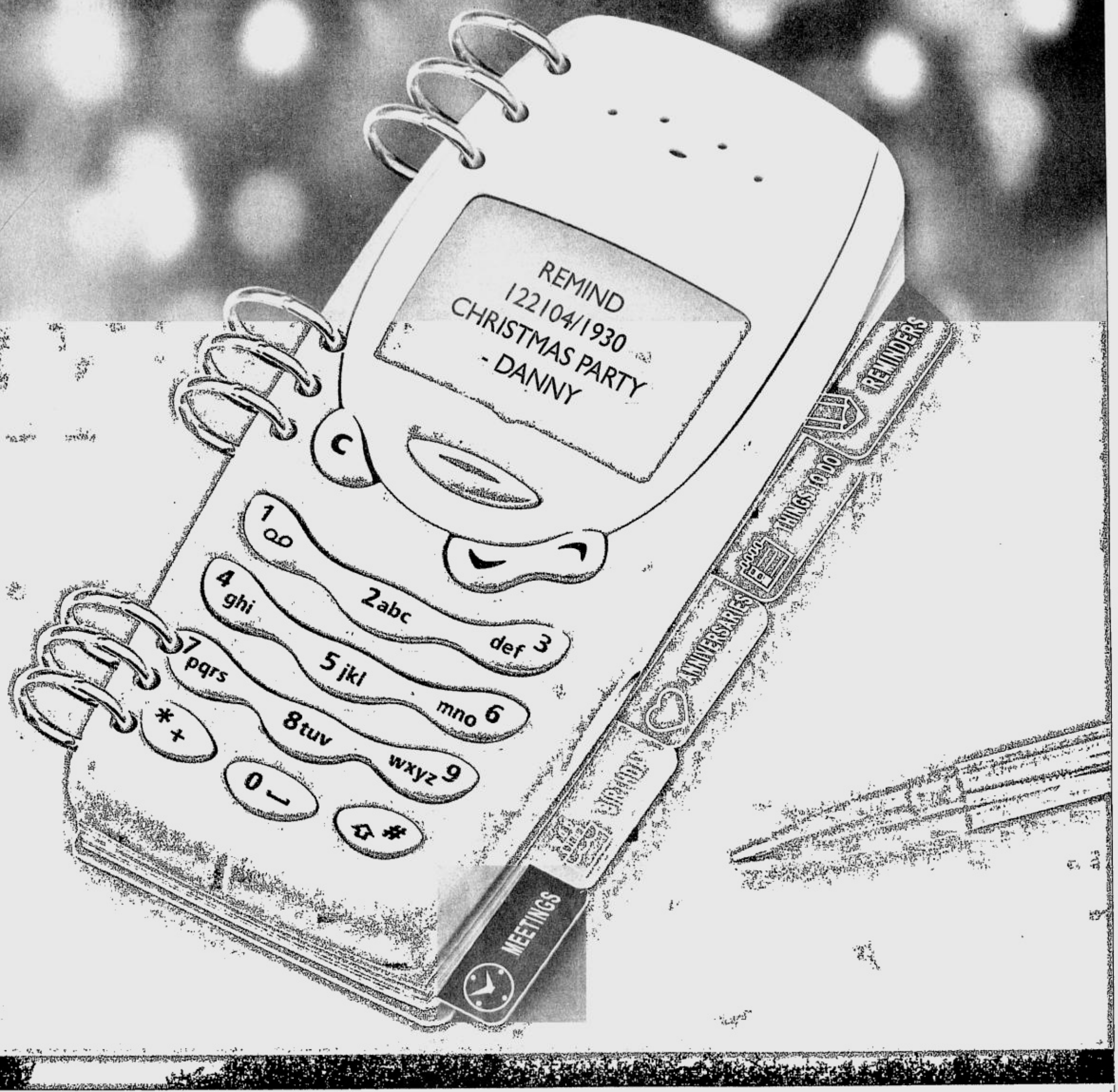

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CINDY: Redefining 'sexy'

The stunning VJ says she'd rather wear tees, tanks and jeans than this little black dress

OUT OF THE CLOSET

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Roger Margallo

YOU COULD be all covered up and still be sexy. Sexiness depends on how you carry yourself," declares actress and MTV video jock Cindy Kurleto.

In fact, the Filipino-Austrian beauty says she prefers a simple T-shirt to a sexy halter-top. "I don't even like shopping," Cindy tells us during this visit to her condominium unit in Quezon City.

She explains: "Clothes for me are merely tools for work." "I buy clothes only if I have to act in a particular movie or TV show, or host a certain function. Besides, there are always designers willing to lend me stuff."

Aside from hosting for MTV Asia, Cindy is also seen in the drama series "Forever in My Heart" on GMA 7, with Regine Velasquez, Richard Gomez and Ariel Rivera.

"My character, Elaine, is the chic and sassy type. She likes skirts, off-shoulder blouses and dangling earrings," she notes. "She exerts effort to dress up. I'm not like her at all."

What Cindy says she is crazy about are shoes: "It's easier to shop for shoes because, unlike clothes, you don't have to go to the changing room."

Shoes. "These rounded-toe sandals are my current favorite. I got them in Bangkok. Round toes are now in fashion to deviate from the common pointed ones. I like them because their color and style are so different. If you wear them with jeans, they will stand out. I often host on stage, especially for MTV. They're hip and look nice on stage. It's like having fun with fashion, not taking it seriously.

"I'm attracted to rubber shoes that are unique, like sneakers with dots or laces on them, or Pumas that have no Puma logos. But for workouts, I wear the same pair of rubber shoes because I don't want to get the others soiled or smelly. I use my really old and reliable Nike cross-trainers.

"I love boots and my favorite pair is this one (holds up a beige velvet pair). Doesn't it look nice? I also love this black leather-suede pair with unique hand-painted designs. It's delicate, soft and fun. Normally, I match it up with Capri jeans and a simple shirt. You don't need to wear loud colors anymore if you wear this pair. I first wore it on a date, and the date went well.

"Mendrez provides most of my shoes. Mendrez is really cool. There are always new designs and motifs—butterflies, flowers, stars,

CINDY/A38

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BESIDE the shades drawer, and cuddling a fuzzy pal

CINDY in some of her favorite things, including sneakers she has had since she was 15.

HER LUCKY charm, a four-leaf clover she found in Vienna

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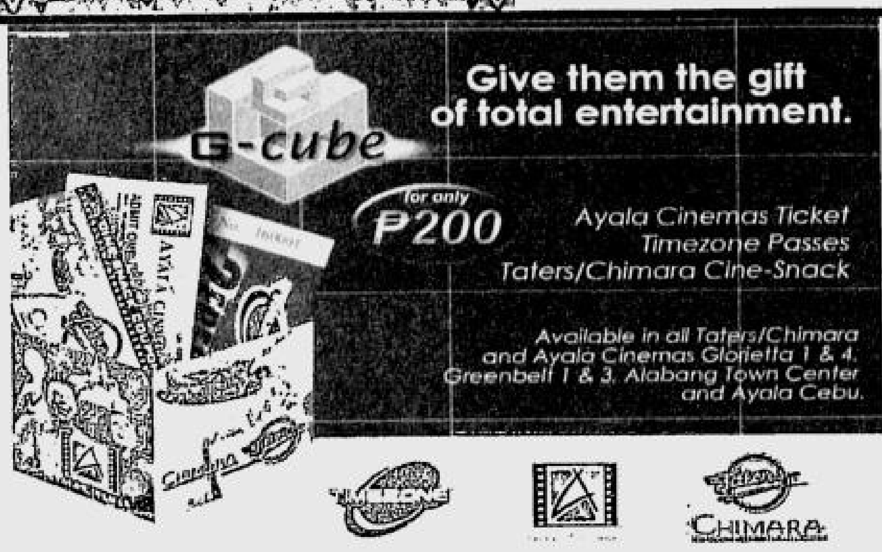

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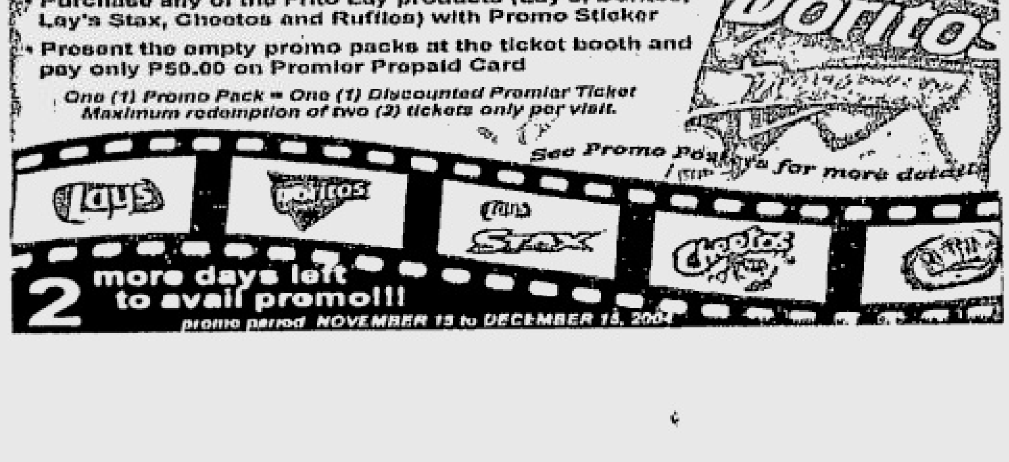

Cindy

From page A37

ribbons and crystals."

Tops. "I bought this top for my soap character. It's like an undergarment that can be worn for going out. I got it in a store called H&M (Hennes and Mauritz) in Europe."

Jackets. "I love this denim jacket because it reminds me of jackets that pilots use. Unfortunately, I don't get to wear this often here in the Philippines because of the weather. I only wear this when I travel.

"This adidas jacket has been featured many times already. This is a favorite. It reminds me of the time when I used to dance a lot. I've had this since 1999. I bought this in Spain."

Pants. "I buy jeans in Bangkok—not because they're cheaper there but because there's so much variety. A good pair of jeans really has to fit your butt and legs well. Never buy a pair of jeans without trying it on. I allot a day to buying jeans because I try at least 20 pairs.

"I like my dark-blue denims from Diesel. It's very versatile. For casual occasions, I pair it up with bright-colored shirts. I wear it with a black top for a more formal look. Pin-striped slacks are very stylish. I also find it interesting if something formal like a pair of cropped pants is mixed with a more casual top. Cropped pants are more flattering and romantic."

Dresses. "I have them in all styles and colors. I have one in bright green, bright pink, one with cherries, with dots, and with stripes on it. I usually wear T-shirt and jeans, so when I buy things other than that, like dresses, I make sure they're worth my money.

"This black dress is a gift from my mom. This is one of my first cocktail dresses. It's a Moschino. I've had this since I was 16 and it has gotten a bit tighter."

Hats. "I get to use all my caps when I host for MTV. You'll never see my character, Elaine, wearing a cap.

"I love caps; I think they're cool. I consider them important when I go out and it's sunny, or when I'm having a bad hair day. It also hides pimples on my forehead and takes away the light that falls on my eyebags.

"Most of these caps are from friends who know I love hats, like the one I got from [fellow MTV VJ Sarah [Meier], which she bought in New York. But my favorite is the one I'm wearing right now because it's a gift from a person I like a lot."

Shades. "My favorite pair of shades is from Chanel. The ones I wear everyday are the not-so-expensive ones because I

CINDY/A3-

SHE ENJOYS shopping for footwear

Cindy: Redefining 'sexy'

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don't want the pricey ones to get lost or broken."

Bags. "I love my pink Louis Vuitton bag. I bought it from its previous owner, who was selling it to a bunch of people who didn't like it. They all found it weird. But now that I'm using it, everybody is saying, 'Oh it does look nice.' People in the mall would approach me and ask, 'Where did you get that?'

"My other favorite bag hangs on the door of my bedroom. I don't use it, I just want to look at it. I've had it since before I joined show biz."

Lucky charm. "It's a four-leaf clover that I got in Vienna. They say if you find a four-leaf clover yourself, it will bring you luck."

Book. "My favorite book at the moment is 'The Experience Music Project: Oral History of Hip-Hop's First Decade: Yes Yes Y'all' This is a treasure because it has all the facts about hip-hop. This was given to me by a nice friend, it even smells like him."

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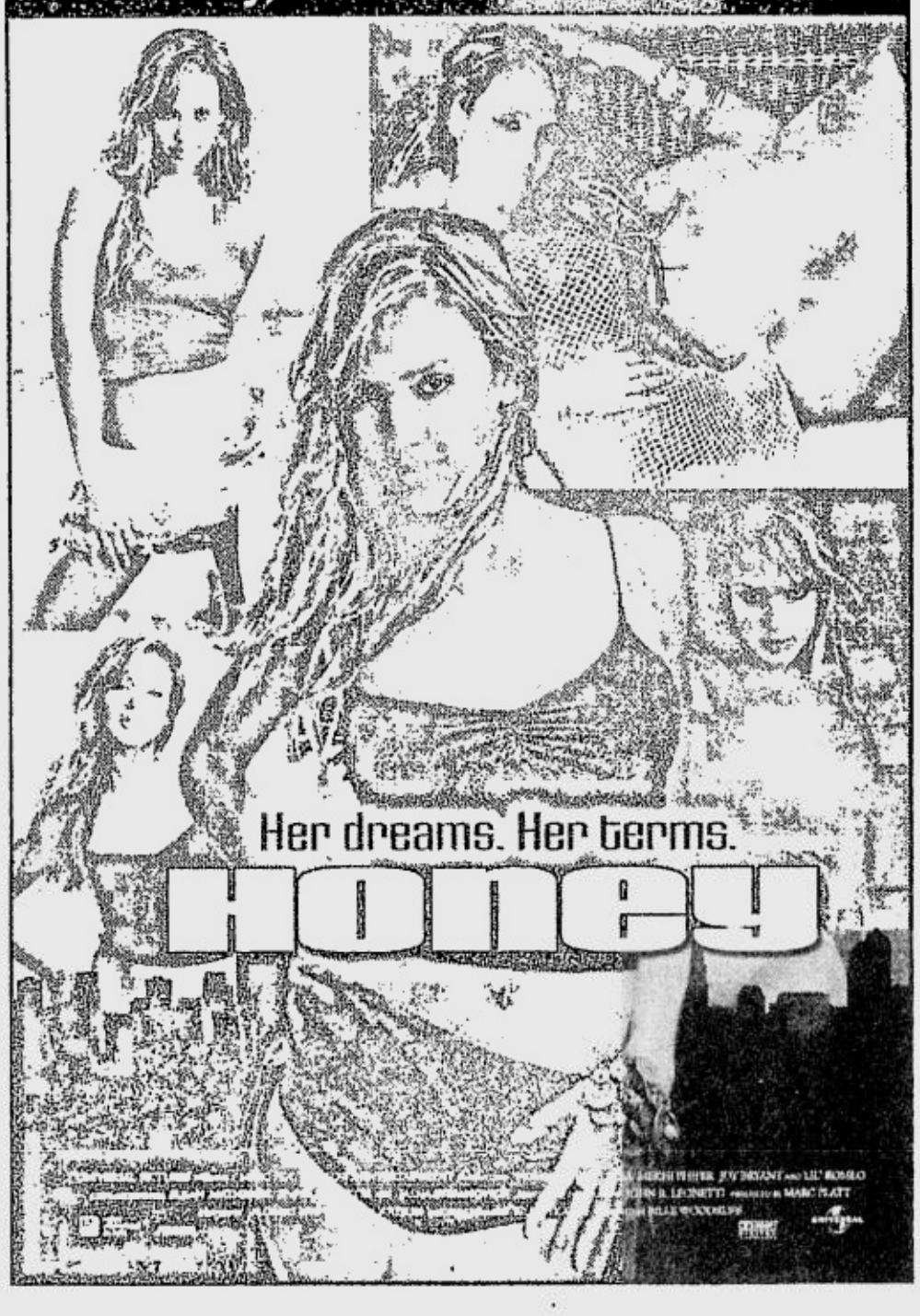

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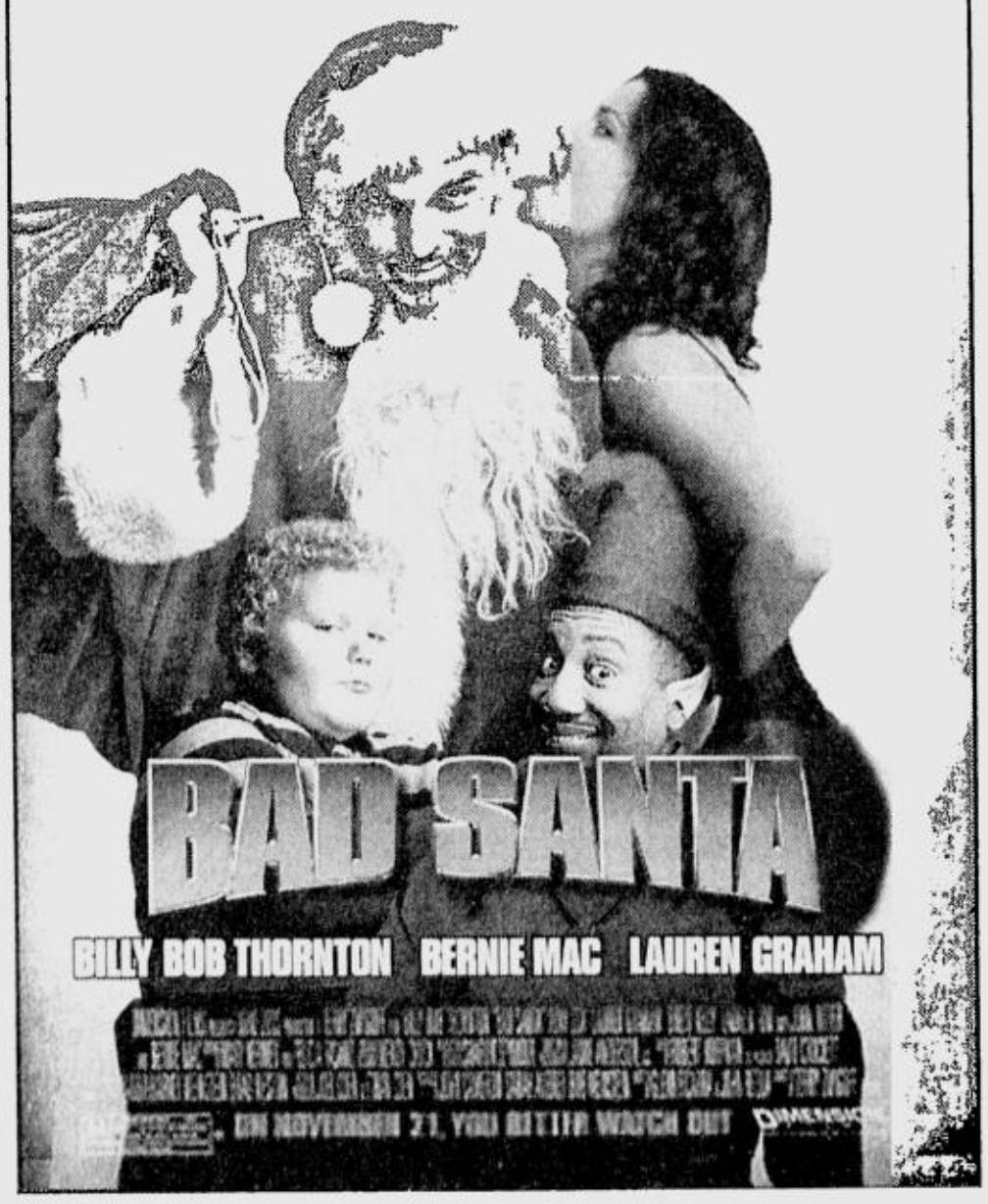

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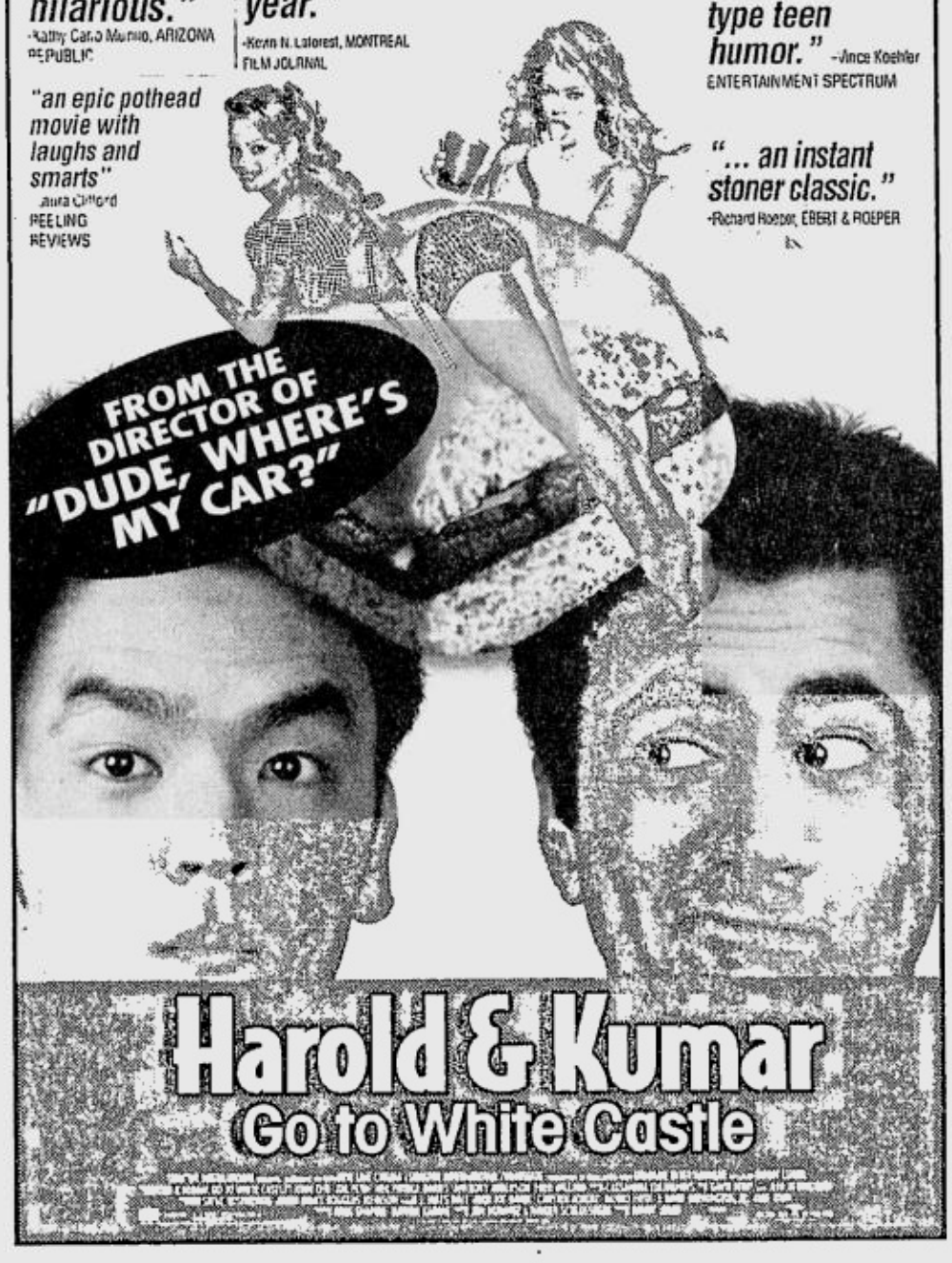

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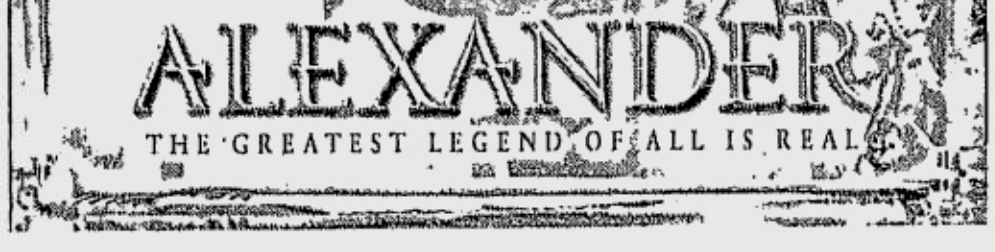

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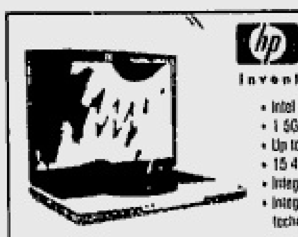

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Expanded coverage of attrition bill eyed

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance wants more revenue-collecting agencies, besides the bureaus of internal revenue and of customs, covered by the lateral attrition bill, which will give flexibility to the government to fire underperforming state officials or employees.

"Since we are in a revenue-raising mood, we want the lateral attrition bill to cover more agencies," Finance Undersecretary Grace Tan said in a briefing Friday.

The DOF said it intended to maximize the revenue potential of the legislative proposal, which will force concerned government workers to meet their performance objectives, such as those related to revenue collection, if they wanted to keep their jobs.

Covering more agencies would better help in efforts to fill in the coffers of the fiscally troubled government, the DOF added.

The plan to impose a performance-based lateral attrition program on government agencies came following the government's gaping budget deficit, which was partly attributed to scant revenue collections.

The dire need to improve the government's efforts in raising revenue had made economic officials rethink the practicality of the law giving security of tenure to state workers. Once the lateral attrition bill is passed into law, government workers will no longer be entitled to the job security they currently enjoy.

The lateral attrition proposal seeks to set performance standards for government workers. Those who will perform better than their job requirements will be rewarded, one way through bonuses, while those who will under-perform will either be fired or simply transferred to a different post.

The proposal has gathered opposition from some members of the BIR and BOC employees' unions. But the BIR, a major target of the attrition system, said that while there could be people critical of the proposal, it has not yet received a substantial number of complaints against it from the employees.

AMATONG

But Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said that with the necessity to improve revenue collection, the DOF would pursue the proposal whether or not it was supported by government employees.

The lateral attrition bill has already been passed by the House of Representatives, but is still being heard by the Senate.

The Lower House's version seeks to impose the lateral attrition system on the BIR, the BOC and other government agencies that earn at least P100 million a year. But under the Senate's version, the bill will only cover the BIR and the BOC.

The DOF is supporting of the Lower House's proposal to include agencies other than the BIR and the BOC. But several agencies, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, have already expressed their opposition.

According to a finance official, the SEC earlier aired its complaint to the DOF by asking why other government agencies should be forced to set revenue collection targets when this was not the focus of their mandates, and when the amount of revenue they collected only depended on the number of people availing themselves of the agencies' services.

"Unlike the BIR and the BOC, whose task is really to collect taxes and duties, agencies like the SEC and the LTO (Land Transportation Office) only depend on the number of registrants for their revenue collection. If there are a few registrants, then they cannot expect to collect higher revenues," the finance official quoted an SEC representative as saying.

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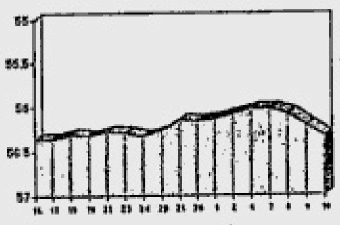


P 56.335 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 10, 2004

¥ 105.22 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 10, 2004

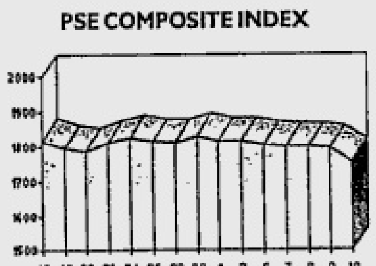
GOLD: $ 434.60-435.10
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 10, 2004

December 10, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.750976	1.000000	56.1640
Japan	Yen	0.007181	0.009562	0.5370
United Kingdom	Pound	1.446005	1.925500	108.1438
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096586	0.128614	7.2235
Switzerland	Franc	0.653136	0.869716	48.8467
Canada	Dollar	0.614296	0.817996	45.9419
Singapore	Dollar	0.456049	0.607275	34.1070
Australia	Dollar	0.565878	0.753523	42.3209
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.992032	2.652590	148.9801
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200261	0.266667	14.9771
Brunei	Dollar	0.454669	0.605437	34.0038
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000109	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.018933	0.025211	1.4160
UAE	Dirham	0.204498	0.272309	15.2940
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.331600	74.7880
Argentina	Peso	0.252641	0.336417	18.8945
Brazil	Real	0.269989	0.359518	20.1920
Denmark	Kroner	0.134581	0.179208	10.0650
India	Rupee	0.017021	0.022665	1.2730
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.197652	0.263193	14.7820
Mexico	New Peso	0.066650	0.088751	4.9846
New Zealand	Dollar	0.531702	0.708015	39.7650
Norway	Kroner	0.121163	0.161340	9.0615
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012664	0.016863	0.9471
South Africa	Rand	0.129200	0.172043	9.6626
Korea	Won	0.000712	0.000948	0.0532
Sweden	Kroner	0.111362	0.148289	8.3285
Syria	Pound	0.014467	0.019264	1.0819
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023352	0.031095	1.7464
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000392	0.000522	0.0293

STOCK MARKET

Seasonal yearend buying seen lifting stocks

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

IT LOOKS like the market may be ripe for some yearend buying, analysts said of the market's prospects this week.

"I think it will be bullish because of window dressing," Joey Roxas of Eagle Equities Inc. said.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 3.5 percent or 63.5 points last week to 1,753.47. Analysts said stocks tumbled over warnings of a credit-rating downgrade.

Roxas said that investors were still going to watch the progress of crucial revenue-raising measures pending in Congress to drum up interest in investing in the country's equity markets.

The Senate is crafting a new sin tax bill that will improve on a watered-down version of the bill. The new version may generate roughly P15 billion in additional revenues a year.

But analysts said that warnings of a credit-rating downgrade caused the market's depression last week.

SEASONAL/B6

'Hot' money inflow down 29% in November

By Doris C. Dumlao

NET inflow of portfolio investments or "hot" money to the Philippines slowed down by 29 percent to $104.4 million in November from a year ago as expectations of a sovereign credit downgrade spooked the financial markets.

According to a report from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, this brought the net portfolio investments for the first 11 months of the year to $626.9 million, or only slightly better than the $625.5 million a year ago.

Although the net inflow in November was better than the $95 million generated in October, it was the first time in four months that the monthly influx was slower than a year ago.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said investors were kept on the sidelines by threats of a possible two-notch sovereign credit rating downgrade by global rating agencies such as London-based Fitch Ratings, which sent a team to Manila in October.

"On the whole it's unfortunate that this is only the share of portfolio investments that we get. Given the liquidity in the region, we should be getting four times this amount," Buenaventura said.

"This is the unquantified cost of a potential downgrade. It's not only on the cost of borrowings but the impact on portfolio investments," he said.

Portfolio inflow refers to nonresident investments in peso bank deposits, government securities/money market instruments and securities listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The BSP chief said weaker investor confidence would also dampen the influx of much-needed foreign direct investments.

"That's why it's important that we work hard to avert a ratings downgrade. And it's doable. All

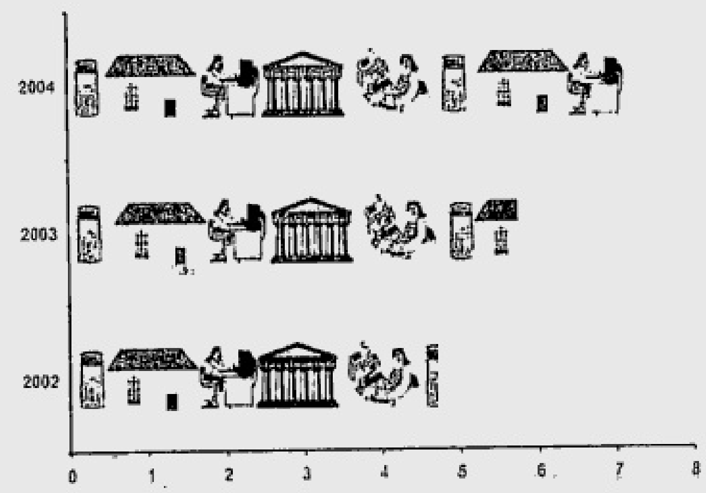
HOT/B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Growth in services sector

(Third quarter 2002 to 2004, in percent)



Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

THE SERVICES sector is still the main driver of the economy's growth, contributing 3.4 percentage points to the gross domestic product in the third quarter of 2004. It grew by 7.1 percent. Except for land transport which contracted by 1.5 percent, all services sub-sectors grew in the third quarter. Communications grew 8.5 percent; wholesale & retail trade, 7.5 percent; financial services, 9.9 percent; hotel, recreational, health services and call centers, 6.5 percent; and government services, 2.4 percent.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Ecozone investments up 54.2%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NEW export projects registered with the economic zones raised approved investments in the first 11 months by 54.2 percent to P37.1 billion from P24 billion a year ago.

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority reported that in November alone, approved projects reached P1.53 billion with average export sales totaling $172 million.

These projects are expected to provide 3,944 new jobs for directly hired workers.

Proponents of four of the biggest investments given the go-ahead last month preferred not to provide the media any information on their projects for now.

The four projects cost P734.1 million, P94.6 million, P139.5 million and P111.9 million, respectively.

Other big-ticket projects approved in November were Integrated Microelectronics Inc.'s P84.5-million venture in the manufacture of head

ECOZONE/B5

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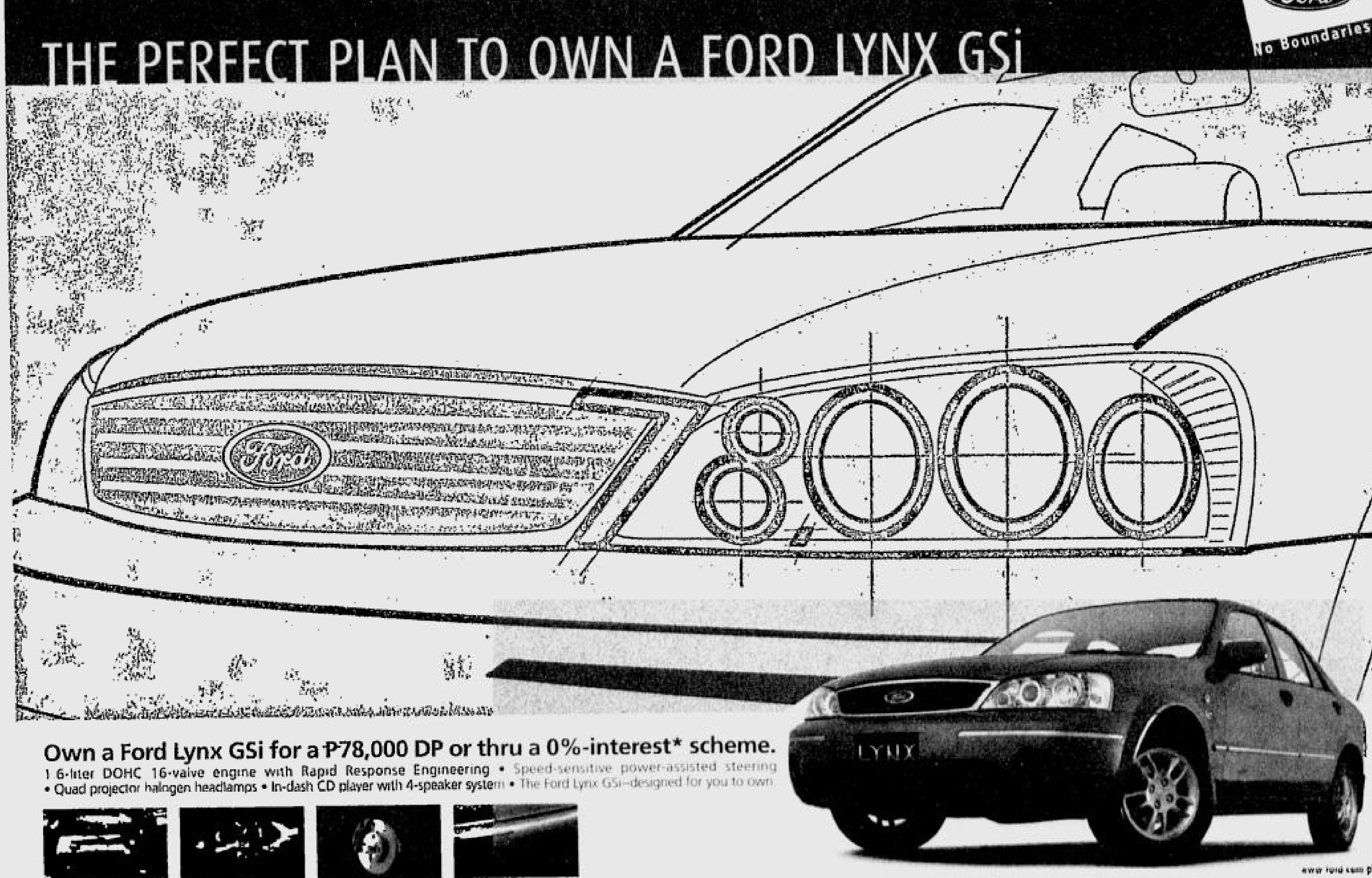

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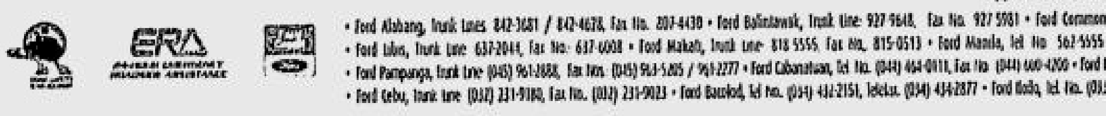

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BSP tightens rules on banks' bad assets write-off

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has tightened the rules governing the writing off of the banks' bad assets, putting in place controls in determining allowances for probable losses.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision Alberto Reyes said a circular approved by the policy-making Monetary Board had placed greater responsibility on bank directors to develop and maintain an "appropriate, systematic and uniformly applied" process to determine the amount of reserves for bad debts or doubtful accounts and other contingencies.

The new circular on loan write-offs implements Sec. 49 of the General Banking Law (GBL) of 2000.

The circular provides that upon the approval of their board of directors, banks may write off loans, other credit accommodations, advances and other assets against allowance for probable losses or current operations as soon as they are satisfied that such assets are "worthless."

In the case of secured loans, banks and quasi-banks may write off an amount corresponding to the booked valuation reserves, provided that the balance of the secured loans and other credit accommodations, advances and other assets will remain in the books.

REYES

For unsecured loans, the banks and non-banks should write off said assets in full outstanding amount.

"When the write-off is approved by the board and is consistent with the BSP's guidelines, there's no need for clearance from the Monetary Board," Reyes said.

But if the write-off of loans and other credit accommodations, advances and other assets were considered as transactions with Dosri or directors, officers, stockholders and related interests, Reyes said the consent of the Monetary Board would still be required.

The General Banking Law limits a bank's Dosri exposure to an amount equivalent to the borrower's unencumbered deposits and book value of paid-in contribution in the bank. However, unsecured loans and other Dosri credit accommodations and guarantees should not exceed 30 percent of any bank's overall exposure.

The law, likewise, prescribes that each bank's Dosri exposure should not exceed 15 percent of its total loan portfolio or 100 percent of its net worth whichever is lower, provided that the Dosri lending would not exceed 30 percent of the aggregate ceiling or outstanding loans and other credit accommodations and guarantees whichever is lower.

Lifting of gencos' zero-VAT status sought

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance said it would propose a bill lifting the zero-VAT (value-added tax) status of power generation companies.

According to Finance Undersecretary Emanuel Bonoan, the plan forms part of the efforts of the executive branch to enhance the efficiency of the country's VAT system by expanding the taxpayer base.

Bonoan said the DOF has yet to come up with estimates on the potential incremental revenue from the proposal. The agency intends to present its proposal during this week's congressional hearings on the bill seeking the lifting of the VAT exemption of selected products and services.

ciency of the 10-percent VAT currently stands at only 3.1 percent. This means the government is losing revenues equivalent to 6.9 percent VAT.

The VAT system features an input-output tax credit mechanism, under which the amount of VAT paid by a taxpayer (input VAT) may be deducted from his VAT liabilities (output VAT). Because of this feature, Bonoan explained, the efficiency of VAT collection largely depends on the size of the taxpayer base.

"If there are more taxpayers in the VAT loop, then it will be easier for the government to check the accuracy of the VAT payments," Bonoan said in an interview with reporters.

If the proposal to lift their zero-VAT status is adopted, gencos can no longer have VAT refunds for their purchases of VAT-covered products. Instead, they will have to use the amount as input VAT credits in paying their taxes.

A VAT exemption is different from a zero-VAT status. A taxpaying firm who is VAT exempt cannot claim as input VAT credits the amount of VAT it paid upon purchase of products or services. The company simply considers the amount of VAT paid as part of its business cost, and could recover it in pricing its products or services. A company that enjoys zero-VAT status can either refund the amount of VAT it paid upon purchase of products or services, or use it as input VAT credits.

The DOF said proposals involving increases in VAT collection would not be a burden to consumers contrary to popular belief.

'Hot' money . . .

From page B1

we have to do is deliver," he said.

Fitch Ratings spared the Philippines from a debt rating downgrade at this time, but changed its outlook to "negative" from "stable" due to heightened concerns on fiscal vulnerability.

The agency gave the country three to six months to show some progress in the implementation of fiscal reforms, in line with what it believed to be an "opportune" stage in the political cycle.

Based on the BSP's own business expectations survey, business confidence has significantly weakened this quarter as skyrocketing oil prices spooked the usually cheerful Christmas season.

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McDonald's goes backdoor listing

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

MCDONALD'S has taken the first in a series of complicated steps to eventually list the American fast food giant's Philippine operations on the local bourse.

This was the import of the Friday announcement, made by the publicly listed Alliance Global Group, which said it was acquiring a 49-percent stake in Golden Arches Development Corp., the joint venture company formed by Alliance Global chair George Yang with the US hamburger giant to own and manage the McDonald's Philippine operations.

According to the grapevine, that 49-percent block represented the equity plus advances made by the Oak Brook, Illinois, headquarters into the local venture.

With the Alliance Global transaction, Golden Arches has become a 100-percent Filipino company, with the Americans, according to the grapevine, getting a combination of cash and preferred shares in Golden Arches in return for allowing the Filipinos to completely manage and own the Philippine operations.

According to the disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Alliance Global also acquired Golden Arches Realty Corp., apparently the real estate company for the McDonald's restaurants in the country, as well the Y & M Development Corp. previously held by McDonald's Restaurant Operations Inc.

The net effect of all these series of transactions is that the US McDonald's will use the cash payment to acquire a block of shares in Alliance Global, the actual size of which is currently undergoing final valuation, according to the grapevine.

A rights offering is also rumored to be underway for existing Alliance Global shareholders.

"We expect the McDonald's

COCKTALES/ B4

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China beckons to Mindanao fruit growers

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

WITH A population of 1.3 billion and an annual growth rate of 8.9 percent, China is fast becoming the world's main market and its appetite for imports including tropical fruits is growing by the day.

Philippine fruit growers, especially those in Mindanao, are poised to gain from this demand.

At the recent 4th Mindanao Fruit Industry Conference, held in Davao City, former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo, who now chairs the Land Bank and heads Quedan Rural and Credit Guarantee Corp., said the Philippines and China are finalizing the terms of the free trade agreement (FTA) that will allow our fruit and vegetable exporters to avail themselves of China's Early Harvest Program (EHP).

Free trade agreement

The program agreement is expected to reduce, and gradually eliminate, tariff rates on agreed products traded between both countries by next year.

At present, fruits from the Philippines are taxed 17 percent by China, while products from Thailand and Malaysia, which took advantage of the EHP, enter China tax free.

This may sound like great news for our local farmers and exporters, but there is also great fear that we will be swamped by a tide of imports from China, which can depress prices of local produce way below production cost.

To make sure this doesn't happen, our government must carefully study the terms of the FTA.

Mindanao fruits

China is said to be interested in importing banana, mango, mangosteen, longkong on a year-round basis from the Philippines and pomelo, papaya, and melon on a seasonal basis.

Last year, China bought $504,000 worth of mangoes from the Philippines whose total mango exports reached $59.4 million.

In 2002, Mindanao accounted for 30 percent of the country's 1 million metric ton mango production.

The Mindanao Fruit Industry (MinFruit) Council, which organized the conference, urges intensified mango production during the "off season," for us to capture a larger piece of the China market.

While Luzon and the Visayas, as well as other Southeast Asian countries like Thailand, grow most of their mango during the first half of the year, Mindanao—which we all know, is outside the typhoon belt—can produce the fruit all year-round.

Mindanao farmers are being trained to do off-season mango production with help from the Department of Agriculture and USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program.

I was informed by Onie Partoza, president of Min Fruit, that more than 600 hectares are covered by this training program.

Across Mindanao, including conflict-affected areas, 2,000 metric tons of "off season" mangoes have been produced as a result of these training sessions involving over a thousand participants.

There are plans to expand the area planted to "carabao" mango in Mindanao, from 35,000 hectares to 140,000 hectares.

King of fruits

Another tropical fruit that could do better in China is durian—touted as the "king of fruits."

Mindanao farmers are thinking of harvesting the fruit from August to November when production in Thailand is low.

But for local farmers to be competitive there is a need to lower prices of pesticides and fertilizers.

MinFruit council

MinFruit, which includes some 36 fruit growers' cooperatives, associations, councils, corporate farms, and marketing organizations, serves as the advocacy and advisory body of the private sector to the government. The council collaborates with growers and member associations for the synchronized and responsible production and delivery of consistently high value fruits to both domestic and foreign markets.

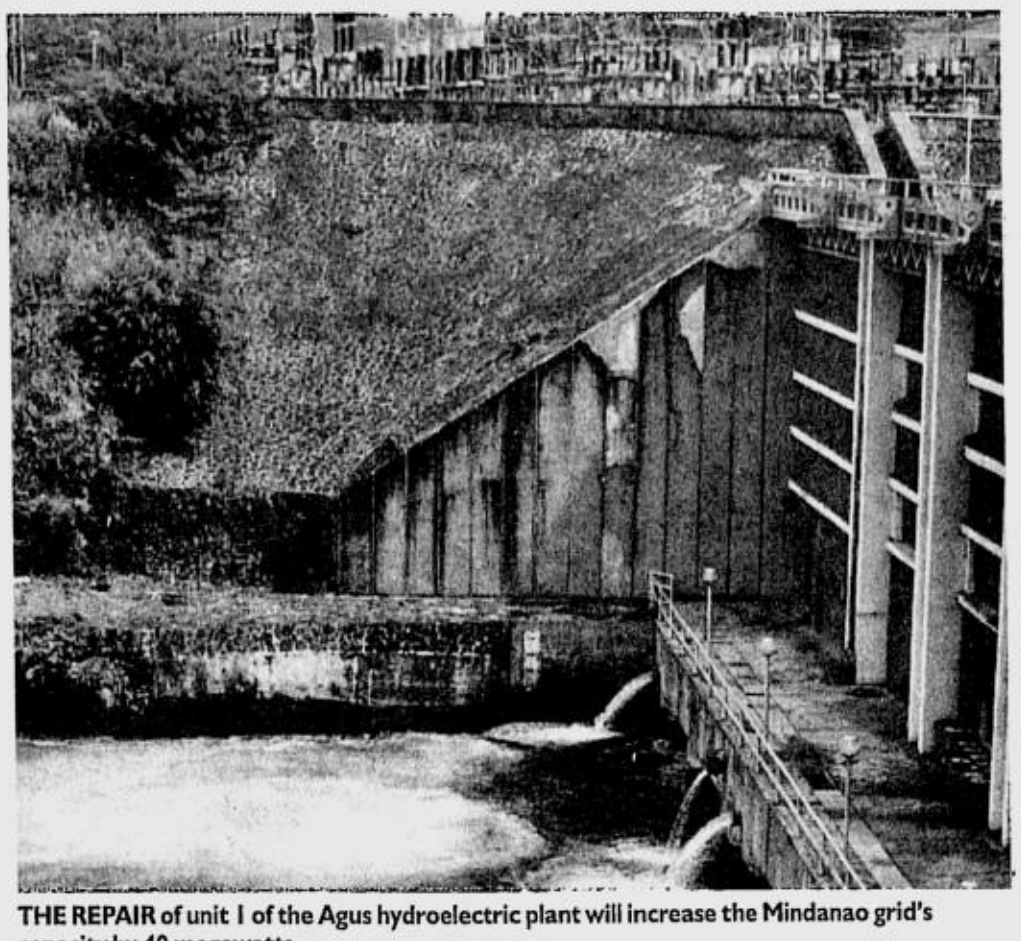
MinFruit has drafted an action plan for next year in order to improve the supply chain for various commodities.

To improve the cardaba banana industry, the council is working with key grower associations to upgrade quality of banana chip produce. There is also focus on exotic banana varieties like Lakatan, Señorita and Latundan which are potential export winners.

More than increasing hectarage and volume of production, growers should strive to increase product quality and competitiveness.

Hopefully, the labors of Mindanao farmers will soon bear magnificent fruit in the Middle Kingdom.

(Joji Ilagan Bian is a strong advocate for Mindanao; she is a member of the Export Development Council and former chair of the Mindanao Business Council; she is vice chair of the Mindanao Commission Of Women and National Corn Board; chair of the Mindanao TVET Association. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)



THE REPAIR of unit 1 of the Agus hydroelectric plant will increase the Mindanao grid's capacity by 40 megawatts.

Agus repair boosts Mindanao capacity

By Abigail L. Ho

THE STATE-RUN National Power Corp. saved at least P35 million in fuel expenses with the early completion of Unit 1 of the Agus I hydroelectric power plant in Mindanao.

The early completion of rehabilitation works on that unit of the power generation facility boosted Mindanao capacity by 40 megawatts (MW).

Unit 1's synchronization with the Mindanao grid at 4:47 a.m. yesterday brought Agus I's total capacity to 80 MW.

It likewise resulted in savings of around P5 million a day, or a total of P35 million for the total number of days that the unit was repaired ahead of schedule.

The Mindanao grid currently has an available capacity of 1,261 MW.

Demand in the main grid, on the other hand, is placed at 1,211 MW, including the 13.2-percent reserve requirement of around 50 MW.

With the supply-demand gap currently at a very narrow 50 MW, the Mindanao grid needs all the capacity it can get.

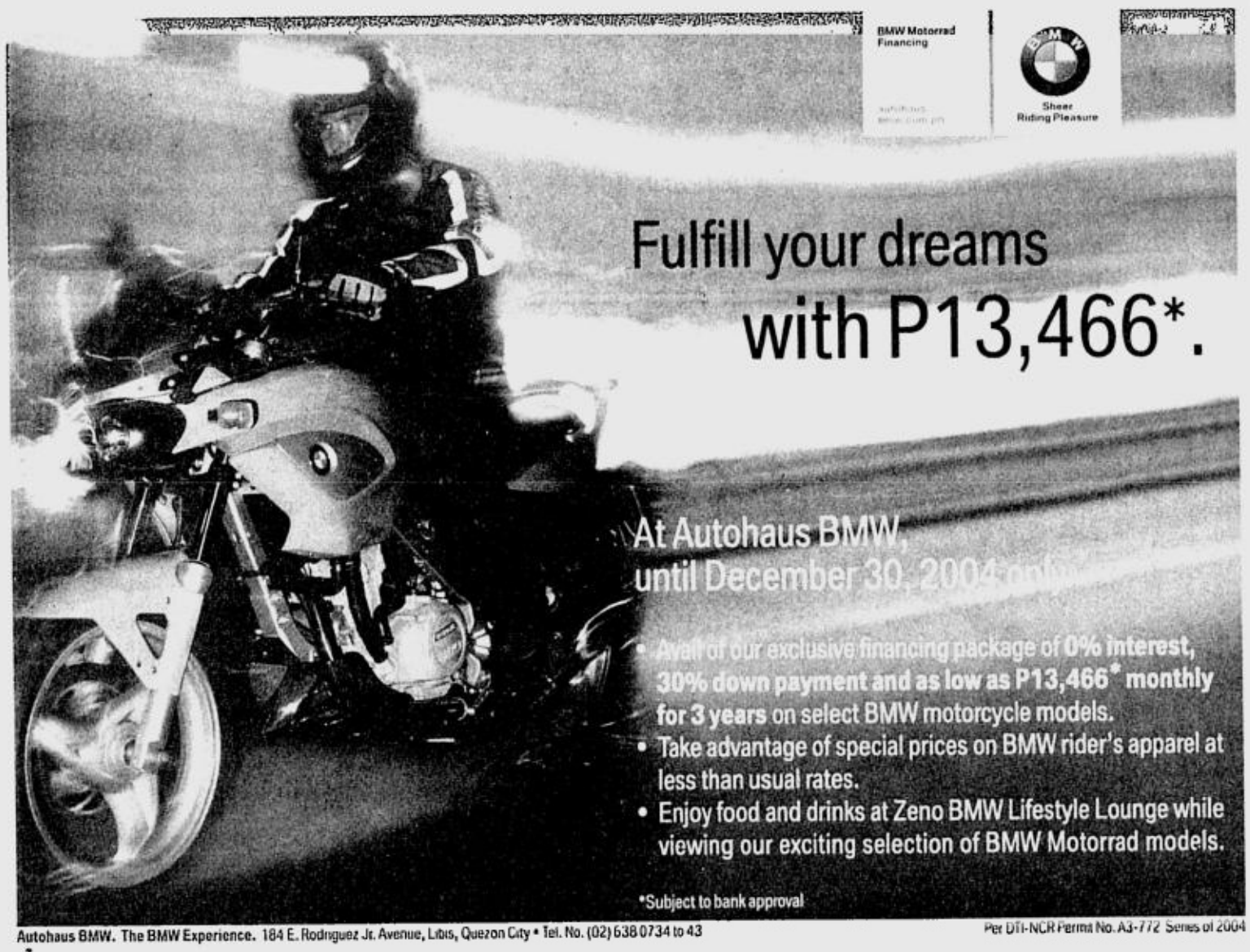
Demand is particularly high in the southern part of Mindanao, with the boom in economic activities in Davao and General Santos.

The early completion of rehabilitation works on Agus I's Unit 1, therefore, provides a much needed boost to Mindanao's current capacity.

Napocor's Mindanao Generation Group undertook rehabilitation works on Units 1 and 2 of the Agus I hydroelectric plant with little supervision from the plant's equipment supplier. This resulted in more savings for the state firm.

The rehabilitation used all state-of-the-art equipment from Austrian supplier VA Tech Hydro, with personnel who underwent extensive training in the operation and maintenance of micro-based processor controls.

The Agus I plant, the most upstream of the six plants which compose the Agus Hydropower Complex, is the first hydroelectric plant in Mindanao to use purely state-of-the-art technology in its operations, including control and protection.



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Cocktales

From page B3

business to substantially improve Alliance Global's revenue-and-earnings outlook in the long term," Yang said in a short statement.

The backdoor listing of McDonald's is apparently a change of strategy for the US McDonald's, which had applied with the Board of Investments as early as 2001 to change the joint-venture structure of Golden Arches to take advantage of the Retail Trade Liberation Law and directly own at least 40 percent of the Philippine operations.

McDonald's has currently 242 stores in the country, of which 165 are directly owned by Golden Arches. The rest are owned and operated by sub-franchisees.

SM primed

TAIPAN Henry Sy has protected his flagship SM department stores from the lean months' revenue downswing by expanding the lease scheme to include a minimum monthly rental payment, in addition to a percentage of the monthly sales of concessionaires.

Beginning January, the lease payment, according to a concessionaire who asked not to be named, would either be P20,000 per square meter a month or 20 percent of the monthly gross sales plus another 3 percent for advertising and marketing expenses, whichever is higher.

Currently, the SM concessionaire lease contract only requires the monthly gross scheme, which sometimes fall below P20,000 per square meter a month during the lean months of January and July-August.

The competing Robinsons, in the meantime, is monitoring how the SM formula would work out, to see if it could adopt the same.

More Christmas tidings

• SENEN Mendiola last week cashed out 270,000 shares of Banco de Oro at P23.25, leaving the SM Shoemart cofounder still with more than 2.05 million BDO shares under his name.

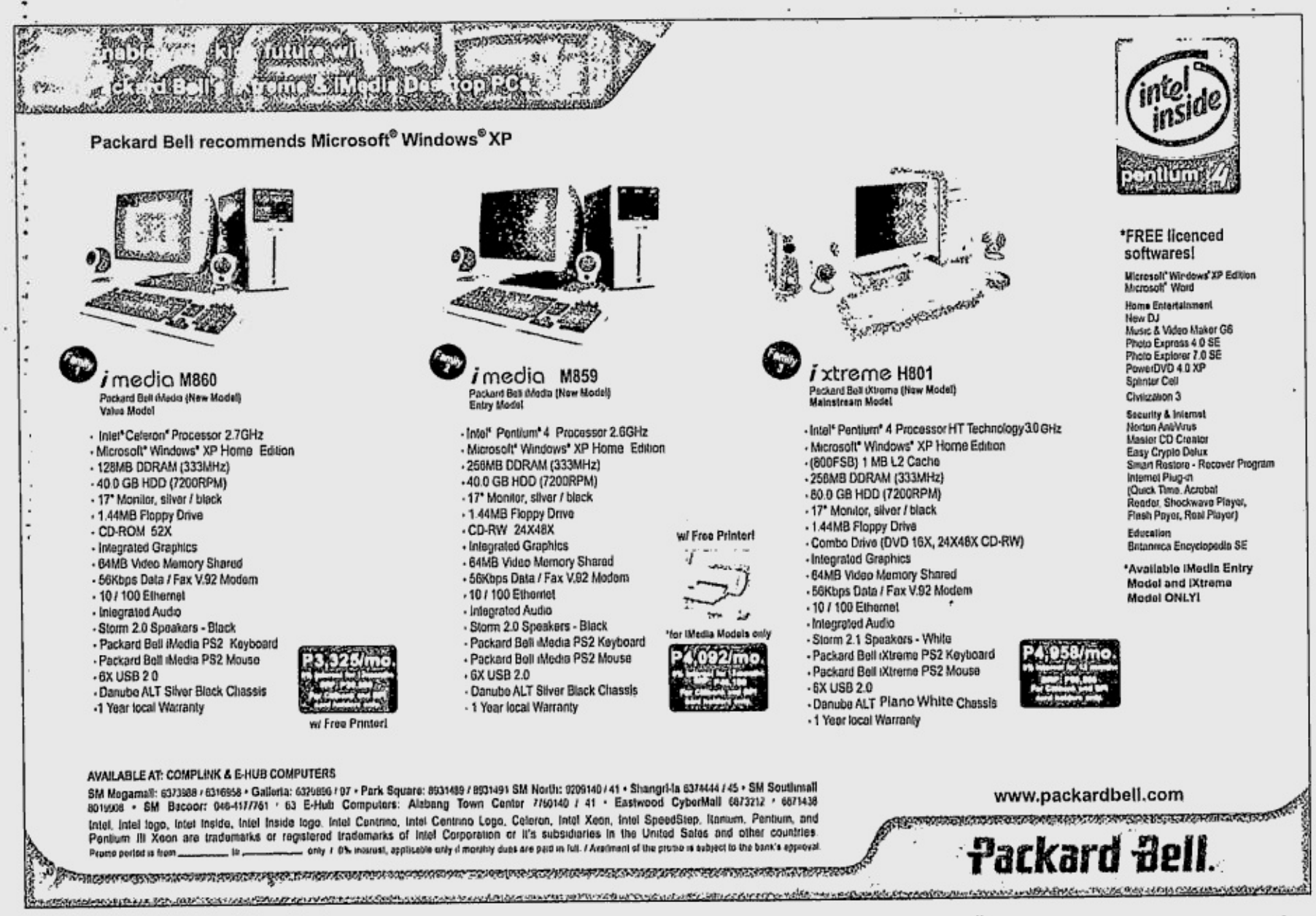
• AYALA Land chair Fernando Zobel last week sold another 150,000 ALI shares, at P7.10/share, in addition to the 2.297 million shares worth more than P16 million he disposed of in a series of transactions in the past month.

Heard through the grapevine

THE SUPREME Court, following the motion to withdraw by the solicitor general, has dismissed with finality the estafa case filed by the Bangko Sentral against former Urban chair Arsenio Bartolome III and board secretary Corazon Bejasa.

The estafa case was actually lost even at the Makati Regional Trial Court level and, later, at the Court of Appeals.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com)



Don't approve CAP property deal, SEC warned

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission may face an inquiry if it approves a pre-need firm's property-for-share deal involving questionable titles in the province of Aurora, according to SEC chair Fe Barin.

The College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP), is currently negotiating the property deal with two firms. Most of the properties in question are located in an area with high flood risks.

Barin said the warning was issued during a Senate budget hearing.

Barin told the Senate that the SEC had not approved the property deal since it was still checking out the the titles involved.

The SEC is also facing a House inquiry for its decision not to renew CAP's permit to sell education and pension plans.

The SEC last week was asked to attend a House inquiry after Party List representative Eulogio Magsaysay filed a resolution with the House committee on banks and financial intermediaries to probe CAP's alleged inability to pay the benefits of its planholders.

Later, a motion was raised during the hearing to investigate the SEC for its failure to issue a dealer's license to CAP.

Green Circle Properties & Resources Inc., and Green Square Properties Corp. will subscribe to shares of CAP in exchange for 3,300 hectares of property in Dingalan, Aurora.

The two firms pegged the total fair market value of the property at P6 billion based on the evaluation of its external appraiser, Cuervo Appraisers Inc.

Through the property swap, Green Circle and Green Square will own 51 percent of CAP.

But the properties are now being checked out, whether these are covered by certificates of land ownership awards that are meant to be distributed to farmer-beneficiaries under the land reform program.

Roughly 200 hectares are said to be covered by the CLOA, leaving CAP with about 3,000 hectares.

The SEC said the titles to be transferred to CAP were "encumbered" or already owned by the government.

The SEC last Friday also said that it was still studying the request of CAP to withdraw from its trust fund to pay the tuition fees of its planholders.

CAP had proposed to use its trust fund to settle the claims since the SEC continued to bar the pre-need firm from selling new education and pension plans.

CAP plans to replace the amount to be drawn from the fund with bonds it holds in the Metro Rail Transit system.

MPC hurdles charge of insider trading

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange (PSE) has cleared Metro Pacific Corp.(MPC), the local unit of Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co., of the charge of insider trading.

This developed as the PSE has decided to let the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) investigate the trading activities of private holding firm SM Investment Corp. (SMIC) and Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

The MPC hurdled the charge of insider trading since it disclosed within a ten-day period changes in its beneficial ownership or the acquisition or sale of at least five percent in a listed firm, the PSE said.

But the Market Integrity Board (MIB) told the PSE to continue checking the MPC Group for possible disclosure violations since the actual sale of First Pacific's MPC shares amounted to 10 million more than what was disclosed.

The MIB has no jurisdiction over disclosure rules but has authority to probe findings on possible insider trading.

The PSE undertook a broad review of trades involving MPC after some brokers alleged that First Pacific Co., MPC's parent firm based in Hong Kong, did not disclose at a much earlier time its planned sale of five percent in MPC.

MPC had said it was open to regulatory scrutiny but stressed that all its transactions at the stock market were properly disclosed.

In a related development, PSE sources told the INQUIRER that the Market Regulatory Office (MRO)—the PSE unit that checks trades of brokers and listed firms—had "no conclusive findings" on the trading activities of Banco de Oro.

BDO executives have declined to comment saying that they were not aware of any probe on BDO shares.

The bank's trades were checked for possible insider trading after SMIC—the holding company of mall magnate Henry Sy Sr. and the controlling shareholder of Banco de Oro—was alleged to have sold shares in BDO after the release of BDO's nine-month profits.

BDO reported in late October that its nine-month profit soared 41 percent to P1.36 billion from P965.2 million in the same period last year.

The case was also referred to the Market Integrity Board. A former Supreme Court judge head the body.

The MIB in turn referred the case to the SEC, since the Philippine Stock Exchange had no jurisdiction over SMIC as a private entity. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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Poultry firms want to export to Hong Kong, South Korea

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE COUNTRY'S poultry raisers are seeking accreditation to export chicken products to South Korea and Hong Kong.

The Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators Inc. (Pabi) said that the Department of Agriculture's National Meat Inspection Commission were assisting the poultry firms to fulfill quarantine requirements of the proposed destinations.

Pabi is composed of the country's largest agri-business firms, including San Miguel Foods Corp., RFM Swift Foods Corp., Tyson Agro Ventures Inc., Universal Robina Corp. and Vitarich Corp.

Poultry Exporters Board chair Ruben Pascual said that the local industry hoped to corner a portion of the $500-million export market for chicken products in South Korea and Hong Kong.

Pabi president Rita Imelda Palabyab said in another interview that San Miguel Foods, RFM-Swift Foods and Tyson Agro-Ventures had exported some 1,000 tons, or 1 million kilos, of poultry products to Japan since the avian influenza gripped East Asia almost a year ago.

The P96-billion Philippine poultry industry remains free of the dreaded avian flu virus.

Agriculture and trade officials, however, claimed that the country still imported at least 5,000 metric tons of chicken to shore up the local supply in the coming months.

Government officials said the chicken imports would avert another increase in the price of poultry.

In December 2003, prices surged to as high as 140 to 150 pesos per kilo. Current market prices hover at P95 to P110 per kilo.

Ecozone . . .

From page B1

stack assembly for disk drives and Metts Pilipinas Realty Corp.'s P72-million warehouse facility for lease.

IMI will locate its project at the Laguna Technopark and earn an average of $1.78 million a year while Metts did not provide figures.

Both Filipino-led projects are geared mainly to the Japanese market.

Another big project is Japanese firm Kito Philippines Inc.'s P66.4-million venture in the manufacture of lever hoists. Its output is exclusively for the Japanese market, with export earnings seen to hit an average of $1.78 million a year.

In terms of projected sales, the unnamed P734.1-million project has the biggest at $127 million a year.

No information-technology related project was registered in November although such investments included the biggest ones approved earlier this year.

There was a total of 273 projects approved from January to November, up 33 percent from 205 projects in the same period last year.

The agency further reported that actual ecozone exports for the first 10 months reached $25.6 billion, an increase of 13.6 percent from $22.5 billion a year ago.

New jobs created during the period jumped 11.8 percent, reaching about a million from about 901,000 in the first 10 months of 2003.

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San Miguel raising $300M via stock rights offering

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL Corp., the country's largest food and beverage firm is targeting to raise $300 million from its planned stock rights offering in January to partly fund its aggressive expansion in the Asia-Pacific region and its bid for a 40-percent stake in Del Monte Pacific Ltd. (DMPL).

Sources told the INQUIRER that San Miguel had pursued its bid for DMPL. However, it was still unsure whether it made it to DMPL's final list of three bidders.

Should it succeed in its bid, San Miguel will have to make a tender offer to the minority shareholders of DMPL.

Italian food company Cirio Finanziara S.p.A. is in advanced talks with three bidders for its 40-percent stake in DMPL.

Officials of the Italian company said in a recent disclosure that Cirio would select one of the bidders "if the terms are acceptable and proceed to enter into a sale and purchase agreement" for the disposal of its 39.99 percent stake.

The final bidders were not identified.

MCI Inc., the holding company of the Lorenzo family, has a preemptive right over Cirio's shareholdings. The Lorenzos hold a 22-percent stake in DMPL.

MCI has the right to match any final offer that Cirio receives and accepts for its shares.

Cirio earlier defaulted on more than 1 billion euros, approximately $1.33 billion in 2002 and is now under liquidation.

DMPL owns the brand rights for Del Monte products in the Philippines and in the Indian subcontinent.

SMC earlier said it would issue additional shares equivalent to 10 percent of its outstanding capital stock.

As of September, SMC's outstanding shares were placed at 2.85 billion shares.

SMC expects that the documents required for the proposed stock offering would be filed by the third week of January.

SMC appointed ABN Amro Rothschild as global coordinator and Sycip Salazar as legal counsel for the offering.

PLDT to cut debts by $500M next year

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. is planning to cut its debts by at least $500 million to less than $2 billion next year, company chair Manuel Pangilinan said during last week's conference of the Philippine Business for Social Progress.

"We will likely reduce the debt of the parent firm by at least $400 million and that of the wireless business by $100 million," said Pangilinan.

The telecom giant said it would prepay on Dec. 20 some $106 million of the $145 million in debt falling due in 2006 to save on interest charges, speed up its debt reduction strategy and minimize currency risks. This will cut PLDT's debt level to about $2 billion.

"By the end of the year, PLDT's fixed line debt balance would be about $2 billion, on track to achieve our target to reduce our debt balance to below $1.5 billion by the end of 2006," said PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno in a statement.

Of the PLDT Group's outstanding $2.99 billion in debt, $2.2 billion is owed by the fixed-line business. Wireless subsidiaries Smart Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp. have a combined obligation of $718 million.

"We consider our efforts to accelerate our debt reduction program a prudent move that will not only generate interest savings but also improve our balance sheet profile and mitigate our risks exposure," added Nazareno.

During a period of foreign exchange volatility, companies with huge dollar exposure like PLDT incur huge forex losses. This year, the telecom giant said it would likely book a P2-billion foreign exchange loss out of its total "unhedged" debt.

PLDT, which recorded a net income of P20 billion in the first nine months, is targeting to end the year with P24 billion in profit.

Pangilinan said the company's profit target this year would not be affected by the foreign exchange losses that might arise from the adoption of new international accounting standards.

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Metropolitan Club A/B*	180,000/200,000*	100,000/130,000*
Mimosa C2/C3*	220,000	280,000*
Mimosa Golf Ind.	-	130,000
Mt. Malarayat A/B*	190,000	300,000*
Orchard A/B*/C**	200,000/350,000**	-
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Manila Polo Club	2.3M	650K
Manila Southwoods "B"	670K	please call
Manila Yacht Club	350K	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	190K	please call
Orchard Golf Club "B"		130K
Orchard Golf Club "C"	380K	please call
Quezon City Sports Club "B"	145K	-
Riviera Golf Club "A"		please call
Rockwell Leisure Club	250K	-
Sherwood Hills "B"	80K	please call
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	1.5M
Sta Elena Golf Club "B"	-	320K
The Country Club at TH	-	740K
Tagaytay Highlands	-	650K
Tagaytay Midlands	please call	350K
The Palms Country Club	350K	200K
Valley Golf Club		6.5K
Wack Wack Golf Club	please call	

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GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007675 * As of December 13, 2004

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,000,000	1,150,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,200,000
Baguio Country Club	500,000	600,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	60,000
Camp John Hay	-	180,000
Canlubang	400,000	-
Canyon Woods	-	160,000
Capitol Hills	100,000	120,000
Cebu Country Club	1,600,000	1,900,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	140,000
Club Filipino	-	120,000
Eagleridge "A"	-	270,000
Eagleridge "B"	-	300,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	300,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	130,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	200,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	220,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	200,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	Please Call	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,500,000	-
Manila Polo	2,100,000	2,300,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	550,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	350,000
Metroclub "A"	120,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	120,000	180,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	260,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	-	250,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	230,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	350,000
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	180,000
Rockwell	-	300,000
Spa & Lodge	500,000	650,000
Sta Elena "A"	Please Call	1,300,000
Sta Elena "B"	-	1,600,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	170,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	350,000	400,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	700,000
The Palms Country Club	-	550,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	120,000	150,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	-	200,000
Valley Golf	200,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,200,000	-

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Opportunity knocks but once.
JOB Market
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Revenue scorecard

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

TWENTY weeks after the opening of the 13th Congress wherein President Macapagal-Arroyo proposed a fiscal package worth P100 billion (P80 billion in new revenues and P20 billion in government spending cuts), and 16 weeks after acknowledging a fiscal crisis in our midst, what have we got to show by way of a response? Specifically, how much additional government revenues are we actually already assured of raising? Are we as Filipinos rising up to the challenge of working together and making sacrifices for the sake of national survival, or are we simply shrugging our shoulders and expecting the next person to worry about the problem, risking the very real possibility of all of us sinking together as an eventual result? Sad to say, but indications so far appear to point to the latter.

Denial syndrome

I don't know if I'm missing something, but I just can't see the sense of urgency that we all should be feeling about our current situation. Here we are, mired in over P6 trillion in public sector debt, which continues to grow because the government needs to keep borrowing massively just to keep operating. About P4 out of every P5 collected by the government in revenue this year is going to debt payments on interest and principal. Next year is projected to be much worse. The DOF's projections submitted to Congress estimated revenue collection at P730 billion, while payments for interest will be P302 billion and payments for amortization of principal will be P385 billion, or a total debt service bill of P687 billion. That means more than P9 out of every P10 (94 percent) of revenue to be collected next year is already tied up for debt servicing!

The P100 billion package the President submitted to Congress was in fact just a basic survival formula that would merely keep the size of the public debt from rising as a proportion of GDP. It is not even what we need to improve the government's fiscal stability; it is just what is needed to keep it afloat. And yet, so far, the only additional revenue we can confidently say would be forthcoming is less than P10 billion from the decimated sin taxes bill approved by the House of Representatives. As pointed out by Rep. Herminio Teves, this can easily be more than doubled by a single provision that was left out of the bill, which is to update the classification of cigarette brands. If the House cannot muster the political will to do what is right regardless of political and business interests, will the Senate vindicate Congress by standing up to the challenge?

More flip-flopping

There had been persistent talk that the House-approved version of the sin taxes bill was the result of instructions from the Palace to the Department of Finance to back down from its original position that would have provided for a 30-percent hike in the excise tax, through the reclassification of cigarette brands and regular indexation of the tax to inflation. If true, Speaker Jose de Venecia would be justified in saying that it was not the House that "watered down" the bill. The culprit was, in effect, the administration, who flip-flopped on its position on the bill.

Now comes the news that the government has dropped plans to pursue the franchise tax on telecommunications companies. Given the urgency of our situation, it is hard to understand the logic behind this new flip-flop, except to attribute it once again to strong pressure from the powerful business interests concerned. I have made no secret of my support for an additional tax on mobile phone companies, whether in the form of a text tax or a franchise tax. Reliable sources inform me that these companies have actually been paying negative value-added tax (VAT) to BIR in recent years. Because they are able to claim higher VAT credits on their inputs than the tax due on their gross sales, the BIR has in effect been paying them, rather than the other way around!

Given that this sector is a dominant source of growth in the economy, is it surprising then, that our tax take has not been growing commensurately with our economic growth? From a simple layman's perspective, it is hard to understand why the sector cannot be taxed more when they can afford to spend what appear to be excessive amounts on lavish advertising. And it is not true that they will simply pass on these taxes to the consumers. For as long as demand for telecommunication services is not perfectly inelastic (where there is absolutely no change in people's consumption at whatever price—clearly not the case here), basic economics tells us that a sales tax can never be completely passed on; the burden will always be shared between the buyer and the seller. At a time when we are all being called to make some sacrifices for the sake of the country, I submit that all of us 'texters' should also be pitching in, along with the phone companies. After all, we can always cut down on frivolous text messages, which make up a significant part of the total text traffic.

Time for patriotism

The recent decision of Fitch Ratings to maintain our credit rating while downgrading our economy's outlook from stable to negative was welcome news for most, given the wide expectations for an actual credit downgrade of as much as two notches. With Standard and Poor and Moody's still set to make their verdict early next year, it is too early to heave a sigh of relief and fall back into complacency. We are already paying one of the largest risk premiums for our foreign borrowings (over 4 percentage points over the interest on US Treasury notes). A downgrade would further kick this up and make it even harder for government to stay afloat. The banking system stands to lose tons of money on their massive holdings of Philippine government securities, whose value automatically go down when interest rates rise. Capital flight is a very real prospect, and a contagion effect across the region is not unlikely. The effect of having an innocuous response to our fiscal crisis can be outright disastrous. And yet after 20 weeks of legislative deliberations, all that is surely forthcoming is less than one-tenth of what we need just to survive.

We need much more patriotism than that—especially from those who can more afford it. *Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 10, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank, Inc.	3	3	3	3	1,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	24.75	24.75	24	24	2,973,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	51.5	51.5	50.5	51	704,900
China Banking Corp.	590	590	590	590	90
Citystate Savings Bank	17	17.25	17	17.25	6,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	49	49	48.5	49	577,500
International Exch. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	1,123,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28	28	27	27	283,400
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	1,800
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	10,000
Security Bank Corp.	30.5	30.5	29	29	29,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	52,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	173	173	173	173	30
Manulife Financial Corp.	2505	2510	2505	2510	670
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	160,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	115	115	112	112	560
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1820	1820	1820	1820	1,380
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	42,800
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.72	1.74	13,785,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	940	945	900	920	58,610
Ipeople Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.6	114,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	100,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	70,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.55	2.55	2.44	2.44	2,441,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1270	1270	1215	1215	265,300
Ivantage Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.7	0.7	6,400,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	16.25	16.25	16	16	37,200
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	26.5	25.5	26	898,000
Petron Corp.	3.1	3.1	3	3.05	3,842,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	3,119,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	100,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.14	153,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Cement Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
Union Cement Corp.	2	2	1.98	1.98	440,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	488,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	32.5	32.5	32	32	73,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29	29	28.5	28.5	147,700
Pancake House Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	9,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	26,900
San Miguel Corp. B	75.5	75.5	75	75.5	33,000
Universal Robina Corp.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	10,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,310,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.3	3,027,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3,292,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	12.75	11.5	12	77,500
A. Soriano Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.54	1.56	615,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	335,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	10,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1	1	45,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	16	16	16	16	17,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.69	0.7	22,930,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	1,000,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.225	1,500,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.95	3.8	3.85	5,443,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	1,300,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	5	5	4.8	4.85	3,516,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	31.5	31.5	30.5	30.5	979,100
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	200,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.055	3,600,000
Ionics Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.4	1.4	66,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3	3	2.9	3	810,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.54	1.56	495,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	6,265,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	150,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	25,350,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	2,210,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	60,000
Wellex Industries, Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	1,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	50,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.61	0.61	8,970,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.92	0.92	560,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	100,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	630,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	18.75	18.75	18.25	18.5	245,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.7	7,397,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	20,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	2,740,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	1,500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	6,860,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.06	8,417,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	300,000
Primex Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	200,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	100,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.215	0.215	0.18	0.205	510,000
SM Development Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.3	1.3	680,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.5	23,314,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	389,500,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.5	40,000
Benguet Corp. A	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	33,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	60,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.26	0.24	0.24	6,530,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.37	17,410,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	287,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	353,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.0046	0.0046	112,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.53	8,010,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.63	0.63	0.62	0.63	13,760,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	260,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	7,200,000
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	2,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0036	0.0036	100,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	89,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0048	0.005	0.0048	0.0048	21,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	690,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	400,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	*2,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	4,300,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	320,000

Seasonal yearend . . .

From page B1

"Investor confidence was hit hardest by Moody's warning of a two notch downgrade. Not only was confidence slipping in equity investments, it was also being expressed by foreign investors in hard assets," Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc. said.

Fitch Ratings, however, offered some mild consolation with its decision not to downgrade the country's sovereign rating. Although it revised its outlook on the Philippines to negative from stable, Fitch maintained the country's "BB" rating on long-term foreign currency and "BB+" rating on long-term local currency.

"It was a pleasant surprise considering that Fitch hinted a few months ago that a downgrade was inevitable. Notwithstanding, Fitch warned that the outlook revision reflects increased concerns about the country's worrying fiscal situation as Congress has yet to pass crucial tax measures to address government's insufficient revenues," Vistan added.

He added in his weekly report that a recent survey conducted by the Wallace Business Forum, which showed that most foreign investors were not impressed with the Philippines due to poor governance and various uncertainties, also added to the worries among investors.

The Philippines was tagged as one of the least preferred investment destinations in Asia. The survey of 49 chief executives of local units of multinational companies showed that only 21 percent were in favor of putting in new investments in the Philippines. More troublesome was the 72 percent that said that the Philippines was the worst investment site versus the rest of the Asean.

Vistan also observed that economic growth was also being threatened by the spike in inflation and interest rates. The annualized inflation rate rose to 7.6 percent in November, its fastest pace in more than five years.

"The market is expecting inflation to hit 8 percent in December due to the spate of typhoons that hit the country recently. Inflation for the first 11 months of the year has already averaged at 5.3 percent, well above the government's full-year target average of 4 to 5 percent," he said. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

BayanTrade breaks into Chinese market

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SUPPLY chain services provider BayanTrade's expansion in Asia gathered steam as it cracked the world's biggest market through a joint venture with China-based healthcare software and information technology services company Symbidia.

Dante Briones, company president and chief operating officer, said the deal covered the development of an official electronic bidding facility for the provincial government of Guangzhou.

Briones said BayanTrade entered into the joint venture through its wholly owned Singapore office called TradeConnect.

BayanTrade's upcoming China operation is the latest addition to its existing projects, including those in Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Thailand.

"China is the biggest emerging market in the region and we at BayanTrade are making sure that we will be positioned to get a chunk of the business from this part of the world," he said.

Briones explained that the planned e-bidding facility would automate the tendering process for the medical supplies and equipment needs of Guangzhou.

Briones said the e-tendering facility would cut down process time and ensure that only appropriate and qualified suppliers would be able to participate in all tendering events.

The facility would also help the Guangzhou province institutionalize a consistent bid format and improve the communication of changes and automatic rejection of tenders with incomplete requirements.

He said the project would also benefit tender participants who will be able to access documents round-the-clock, save on travel costs and time in submitting tenders, prevent risk of travel delays and ensure that their tender requirements are complete and in order.

Briones said that among possible partners, Symbidia chose TradeConnect for the joint venture because it leveraged on BayanTrade's deep understanding of sourcing and procurement processes, as well as its expertise in bid structuring and bid management.

The e-tendering project is TradeConnect's initial venture with the Hong Kong-based Symbidia, which has extensive operations in Shanghai and Beijing.

RP seen missing growth target

By Michelle V. Remo

US-BASED investment bank Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. said the Philippines might miss the projected 6-percent economic growth for 2004 because of the ill effects of the recent typhoon Yoyong on the agriculture sector.

In its latest briefing paper, the investment bank said agriculture production, which accounts for a fifth of the Philippine economy, would decline in the fourth quarter because of the damage inflicted by the typhoon especially on rice and corn producing areas.

Typhoon Yoyong affected over a hundred thousand families and resulted in more than a thousand casualties in several provinces, including Catanduanes, Camarines Norte and Aurora.

Economic output might also be hampered by the severe destruction of roads, bridges and shelter in hard-hit rural areas. It was fortunate that the Metro Manila area was spared from the impact of the typhoon.

"Most importantly, electronics factories in the Metro Manila area, which accounts for 90 percent of exports have not been severely affected. Also, larger amounts of (overseas) workers' remittances will likely flow in to aid distressed relatives" Bear, Stearn & Co. said in the paper.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) earlier expressed confidence that the Philippines' gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2004 would reach at least 6 percent, following the relatively high economic growth in the first three quarters of the year.

The government's growth target for this year was originally set at a range of 4.9- to 5.8-percent, but the higher-than-expected economic output in the first three quarters of the year forced Neda to jack up its GDP growth target to 6 percent for the whole year. The robust production of the agriculture sector from January to September contributed largely to the higher-than-projected growth during the period.

Typhoon Yoyong, however, could slightly pull down GDP growth this year to lower than the 6-percent projection.

But the investment bank said the adverse economic effects of the typhoon would only be felt in the remaining months of this year. In 2005, the investment bank said, the damage caused by a typhoon may even result in a more aggressive economic activity.

"The reconstruction activity should generate a larger contribution of investment to GDP growth in 2005," the investment bank said.

Bear, Stearns & Co. said the destruction caused by the recent typhoons that hit the country might draw the attention of the legislators away from the revenue-raising measures proposed by the executive branch since they might have to attend to their respective constituents.

The government is hard-pressed to immediately implement the proposed fiscal reform measures because the international capital market and credit rating firms will judge the country's ability to weather its fiscal problems based on the progress of these measures.

An evening with Ms Arroyo

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

WASN'T it nice of President Macapagal-Arroyo to have invited the leaders of the telecom industry to dinner (or was it lunch?) at her Forbes Park home?

Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala of Globe, Manuel Pangilinan of Smart and Lance Gokongwei of Digitel headed the powerhouse guest list.

Arrayed against them were Senate President Franklin Drilon, Speaker Jose de Venecia, Finance Secretary Amatong, Trade Secretary Purisima, House ways and means committee chair Lapuz and Senator Roxas.

The main conversation piece was—what else?—taxes. The telecom people prevailed on President Arroyo to discard the silly idea of slapping sales with a franchise tax while purchases and importation would remain subject to the value-added tax. That would have made a mongrel of the tax system on the telecom industry.

As a result of that meal, Congress is now rushing a bill to raise the VAT on the telcos' sales from 10 percent to 12 percent to replace the badly conceived franchise tax.

It must have been quite a meal. But the menu, undoubtedly continental, remains a state secret. It was probably catered by my good friend Glenda B. and served on the finest china and the purest silver. Surely, the conversation was generously lubricated with excellent French wines from Glenda's well-stocked cellar.

See what good food and fine wine can do?

Now, the question is: How does one get invited to President Arroyo's Forbes Park home to discuss taxes?

For the past four months, we—lowly insurance brokers, agents and adjusters—have been seeking to see Revenue Commissioner Parayno to present a position paper against excessive creditable withholding taxes. Nothing doing. He has been too busy.

Our complaint is that the BIR has raised the withholding tax rate to as much as 15 percent of gross income. It is true that the withheld tax is creditable against the income tax, but the amount withheld is way in excess of the eventual income tax payable. The taxpayer is then faced with the insurmountable problem of seeking a refund of the excess.

Whoever heard of the BIR refunding excess withholding tax? The taxpayer doesn't even bother to ask for a refund anymore. As a result, the 15-percent withholding tax becomes the final income tax, a de facto tax increase. Nowhere in the tax code is a taxpayer subject to a 15-percent tax on gross income.

Hey, we are willing to do our share in solving the national fiscal crisis. But extorting money from us beyond the prescribed income tax rate is simply wrong.

We are asking that the withholding tax rate be rolled back to the original 5 percent.

How much money are we talking about? Admittedly, nowhere near the amount involved in the telecom industry. But the money the BIR excessively takes from us is nothing to sneeze at. And it hurts.

Since Commissioner Parayno could not find the time to see us, we sent a messenger to submit our position paper. Last week, after a couple of follow-up phone calls, I had a nice chat with a technical assistant at the BIR Head Office. We agreed on certain changes in the presentation of the issues posed by the position paper.

With the tenacity insurance intermediaries are notorious for, we still hope to chat with Commissioner Parayno. Or, miracles of miracles, a snack at the President's Forbes Park home? We expect no sumptuous feast. A round of weak coffee will do just fine.

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Plantersbank gets nod to raise $10M to pay debt

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board has approved the Planters Development Bank proposal to raise $10 million through the issuance of subordinated debt.

Planters would become the first thrift bank to tap this tier 2 capital-raising option.

Alberto Reyes, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas deputy governor for bank supervision, said the $10 million was on top of a ₱700-million borrowing which Plantersbank was also considering.

"This is to enable Plantersbank to pay its short-term dollar obligations," Reyes said.

Earlier, the Monetary Board relaxed the rules on the issuance of subordinated debt or tier 2 capital to open this fund-raising option to smaller banks.

Reyes said Plantersbank was the first thrift bank to take advantage of the relaxed guidelines.

The MB had scrapped the requirement that only banks with quasi-banking license could issue unsecured subordinated notes.

Quasi-banks are defined as entities engaged in obtaining funds other than deposits from more than 19 creditors for the purpose of relending. Such entities include investment houses and financing companies.

The old requirement restricted the subordinated debt offering option only to commercial banks.

Under the new risk-based capital adequacy framework adopted by the BSP, qualifying capital consists of tier 1 or core capital and tier 2 or supplementary capital. The delineation between core and supplementary capital is based on the capital elements' ability to absorb losses.

Planters Bank, majority owned and managed by the Tambunting family, is the country's largest private development bank with total consolidated assets of P30 billion, capital of P2.9 billion and network of 70 branches.

The bank has specialized on SME lending over the last 40 years and is a consistent recipient of awards and citations from the country's funding and guarantee agencies for SMEs. It is among the top 250 corporations in the Philippines.

Globe seen to incur P2.3B in forex losses in January

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. is expecting to book about P2.3 billion in foreign exchange losses in early 2005 once it starts adopting the new global standards of accounting.

Delfin Gonzalez, Globe's chief financial officer, said the "capitalized foreign exchange losses would be charged to retained earnings." He said the adoption of the new standards won't affect the company's bottomline.

Companies worldwide must comply with two new international accounting standards.

The first, already being implemented this year, requires companies to book any foreign exchange losses on transaction on the year the losses were incurred and not later.

Up for adoption next year is the requirement that outstanding losses on foreign exchange transactions be made transparent.

"This would just be a balance sheet adjustment," according to Globe president Gerardo Ablaza Jr. "It would not have any effect on PNL (profit and net loss statement)."

As of end September, Globe had around $926 million in debt, 80 percent of which are foreign denominated. With its foreign exchange swap contracts, Globe's foreign denominated debt has effectively been reduced to 55 percent of total debt.

Globe has $160 million of debts maturing in 2005 and $168 million in 2006. The company said it has enough internal funds to settle its debts even as third quarter profits of P2 billion fell 34 percent against the same period last year.

From January to September, the company registered a net income of P8.96 billion or 19.4 percent higher than P7.5 billion in 2003.

Gonzalez said the company would continue to hedge its foreign exposure. He said of the 55 percent of Globe's debt in dollars, about 40 percent was hedged.

An analyst said the new accounting standards cover mostly debts that were not hedged.

In mid-2004, Globe forged a deal with International Finance Corp. for a $140-million peso swap facility.

"The intention is to maintain 50 percent of the company's total debt in pesos," Gonzalez said.

According to Globe, a joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom, about 26 percent of its annual revenue were dollar-denominated.

Globe would finance about $350 million in estimated capital expenditures this coming year. The company is planning to borrow between $100 and $150 million from banks to fund part of its network rollout.

Ablaza said the company would roll out at least another 1,000 cellular sites next year to expand its coverage. Globe hopes to end the year with about 3,600 cellular sites, which will cover 85 percent of the population.

Globe's network could support a subscriber base of more than 13 million.

As of end-September, it already has 11.7 million customers.

Ablaza said Globe's wider network coverage helped the company sign up more subscribers from the provinces.

A MAN passes by a car buried in mud at a gasolin Quezon province. Relief crews continue to distrib and logs started to clear out in villages ravaged by least 740 people dead and 754 missing.

International telco firms out to grab slice of RP

THREE of the world's largest telecom players are scouring for investment opportunities in the Philippine market and are particularly interested in the introduction here of the third-generation or 3G wireless technology.

Sources identified the three companies as Vodafone Group Plc, the world's largest, NTT Docomo, Japan's biggest, and Hutchison Telecommunications International of Hong Kong which operates in seven other countries.

Ronald Solis, chair of the National Telecommunications Commission said he had heard about the interest of the three foreign players. But he added he had not received any formal communications from any of them.

But, Solis said, "if this is true, I believe their entry would be healthy for the industry ... they can come in at 40 percent."

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom Inc. already have foreign partners. PLDT is about 24 percent owned by First Pacific Co. Ltd. and about 15 percent owned by Japan's Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Co.

Singapore Telecommunications Ltd. has a 40 percent-stake in Globe.

Speculations are rife that the foreign players are eyeing the Gokongwei-owned Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc. and the Lopez-owned Bayan Telecommunications Inc. The Lopez Group also owns a big part of the moribund Express Telecommunications Inc.

The NTC has scheduled the bidding of 3G frequencies in 2005. But PLDT and Globe are opposed to the plan, saying that the local market is not yet ready for the third wave of cellular technology.

Officials of Globe Telecom Inc. and Smart Communications Inc. said it would take between 4 and 6 years to develop a market for 3G as consumers may not yet afford the pricey handsets.

Third-generation technology or 3G is the next evolution in digital wireless technology. With 3G, downloading of video, for instance, could happen in half the time it normally takes using the current technology. The exchange of text, digitized voice, video, and multimedia takes place at more than 2 megabits per second.

Vodafone and NTT Docomo are pioneers of 3G in places were they operate.

Vodafone has a significant presence in Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States and parts of Asia. In the US, the company operates as Verizon Wireless.

NTT DoCoMo, a unit of NTT, is the creator of W-CDMA technology, a 3G platform which the Japanese firm hoped would become the new global industry standard.

Hutchison, the Hong Kong-based port-to-phone operator wanted to expand in emerging countries. It had already started adopting the 3G technology in some of the places where it operates. Hutchison is present in eight countries, including Hong Kong, India, Israe and Mac

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Napocor power generation up 5.39%

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER produced by the state-run National Power Corp. has increased by 5.39 percent in the first nine months of the year to 30,912.74 gigawatt-hours (GWh) from 29,332.77 GWh in the same period last year.

Data from Napocor's sales and services group showed that coal-fired power plants remained the biggest contributors to the state firm's overall generation mix at 30.42 percent, slightly lower than last year's 31.04 percent.

Coal-fired power plants produced 9,402.69 GWh of power in the first three quarters of the year from 9,105.48 GWh in the same period a year ago.

The second largest contributors to the total generation mix were geothermal power facilities with a 25.23-percent share of the pie at 7,800.24 GWh.

This year's figures for geothermal plants, however, represent a slight decline in generation mix share and generated power from last year's 25.90 percent at 7,597.41 GWh.

Hydroelectric plants posted a slight growth in its contribution to Napocor's generation mix at 20.24 percent in the January-September period from 18.95 percent in the same period the year before.

Generated power likewise went up to 6,256.87 GWh from 5,557.54 GWh last year.

Like their hydroelectric counterparts, oil-based power plants increased their contribution to the generation mix to 13.44 percent at 4,153.59 GWh from 12.60 percent at 3,695.51 GWh a year ago.

Natural gas plants had the smallest share in Napocor's gross generation mix at 10.67 percent or 3,299.35 GWh, declining slightly from last year's 11.51 percent or 3,376.83 GWh.

Region-wise, Luzon contributed the most to the generation pool at 65 percent or 20,120.22 Gwh.

Plants in the Visayas grid accounted for 18 percent or 5,610.06 GWh of the power produced by the state firm in the first nine months of the year, while those in Mindanao contributed 17 percent or 5,182.46 GWh.

DOE seeks US technology to turn coal into gasoline

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy is currently convincing a large American energy firm to bring to the Philippines its technology to convert coal into gasoline.

Energy officials said the technology would ease the country's dependence on imported crude and refined petroleum products.

Energy Undersecretary Peter Anthony Abaya revealed that negotiations were now ongoing with the American company, although there were still no firm commitments on whether the US firm would be investing in the country.

He declined to name the company, saying it would be more appropriate to do so once something concrete had been forged.

All he said was that the firm was involved in nanotechnology and coal-to-gasoline transformation.

The entry of the American firm would help ease the country's reliance on imported crude and refined petroleum products and at the same time enable the full utilization of coal being produced in the country's mines, particularly in Semirara, he said.

Based on initial studies, there were indications that local coal was suitable for the coal-to-gasoline transformation technology of the American firm, according to Abaya.

"As we're pushing for the use of more renewable energy resources in power production, we want to realign coal use for the transport sector," he told reporters.

Apart from unleaded gasoline, he said the company could also transform coal into diesel, liquefied petroleum gas and even petrochemicals.

The American company is now operating in China, Abaya said.

"If (the firm) comes into the Philippines, that would mean a very big investment," he said. "Also, the products that they would come up with would be priced lower than those in the market today."

But Abaya was quick to add that the government's efforts to tap new technology was not meant to replace traditional fuels. Alternative fuel sources would just be tapped to bring relief to consumers amid rising oil prices. *Abigail L. Ho*

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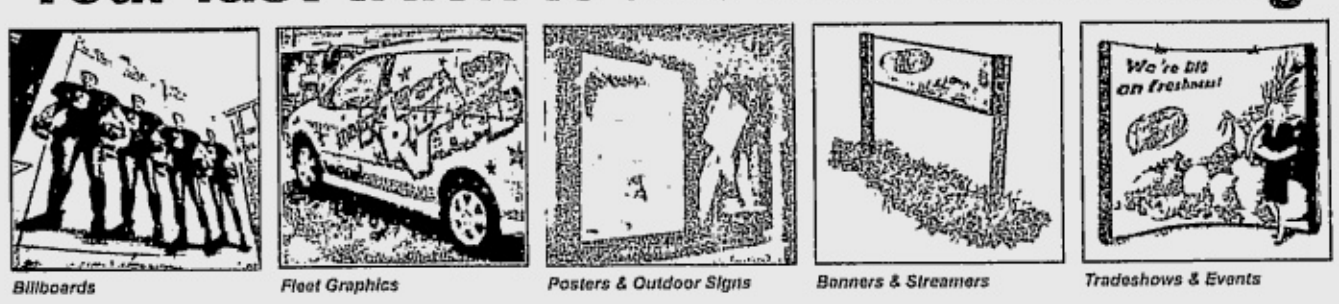

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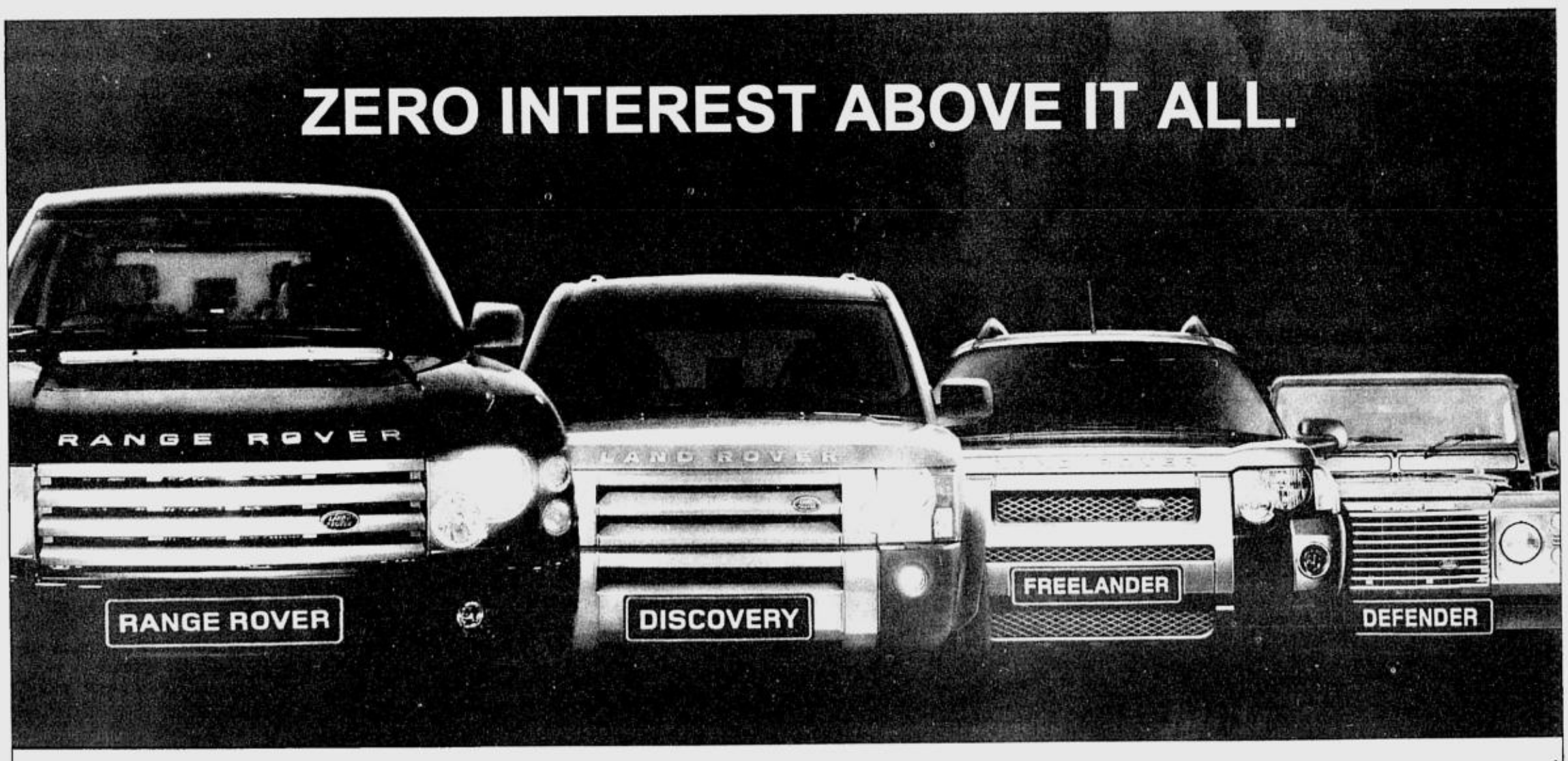

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Asia's IMF chief wants market access for poor

MIYAZAKI, Japan—Wealthy governments must open their markets to the world's poor and developing countries need to listen to critics when they make economic policy, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Asia says.

Hiroyuki Hino is a lonely figure in this southern Japanese town, where labor union representatives from 150 countries are plotting strategy and many consider international financial institutions enemy number one.

But the director of the IMF's regional office for Asia dismisses criticism that the Fund wants to dictate to developing nations and is calling for a dialogue to address the labor movement's concerns.

One top worry voiced by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, whose World Congress here is its first in Asia, is next month's end of the industrialized world's 40-year-old quota system for clothing imports.

With organized labor fearing that China's pool of cheap workers will crush all competitors, Hino believes the developed world should ensure that poor countries still have markets for their goods.

"I think it is very critical for developed countries to increase the access for the poorest countries to their markets and also to reduce subsidies on their agriculture because trade exports are very, very important," Hino told AFP.

"This is how these (developing) countries can grow faster and become independent on their own," said Hino, a US-educated Japanese economist.

Agricultural subsidies have become a key sticking point in world trade negotiations, with developing countries contending that rich nations' aid to their own farmers makes it impossible for the poor to compete.

A major theme at the Miyazaki meet is how to rekindle the labor movement amid concern that growing globalization leaves workers at the mercy of multinational companies and institutions such as the IMF.

But in the view of Hino, global financial institutions are only among the actors formulating programs that ultimately belong to individual countries and their governments.

"It is critical that the programs are those of the countries concerned, not ours. It is also important that those programs reflect the concerns of all the stakeholders," Hino said.

"In the discussions, of course, all kind of issues can be and should be raised. The social concerns should be raised," he said.

Before assuming his present post in 2002, Hino was a senior adviser for the IMF on Africa, a continent where he said some IMF programs have succeeded in bringing in more social players.

"In some countries of Africa that I know, they say as a result of this process, the organizations in the country feel they are better informed, they are taking part of the process," he said. *AFP*

Brazil launches bid for top WTO job

GENEVA—Brazil launched its bid on Friday to head the World Trade Organization (WTO), saying its candidate could strengthen the role of developing countries in the global trade body.

Brazilian contender, Luiz Felipe Seixas Correa, the country's envoy to the WTO, faces competition from at least two other developing country candidates along with former European Union trade chief Pascal Lamy.

They are bidding to take over from Thailand's Supachai Panitchpakdi, who stands down next August, as the WTO battles to conclude the already-delayed Doha Round of global free trade negotiations.

Noting representatives of rich nations already presided over the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, a top Brazilian official said many of the WTO's 148 member states felt it important that the world's top trade job not also go to them.

"The prevailing feeling in Geneva and capitals for years now was that the next (WTO) director-general should come from a developing country," said Clodoaldo Hugueney, Brazil's chief trade negotiator, who was in Geneva for the candidacy announcement.

Although both Hugueney and Seixas Correa declined comment on the relative merits of the various candidates, they made clear they felt Brazil was a better standard-bearer for developing country interests than South American rival Uruguay.

Brazil is the spokesman for and a founder member of the Group of 20 alliance, which includes India and China.

Uruguay, which is fielding former WTO envoy Carlos Perez del Castillo, is not a member of the G20.

The influential group was instrumental first in the failure of a WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico, in late 2003, which threatened to derail the trade round, and then in putting it back on track at marathon negotiations last summer. *AP*

A VENDOR waits for customers at a market in Beijing. China's consumer price index rose a less-than-expected 2.8 percent in the year through November compared with 4.3 percent in the 12 months through October, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Friday. REUTERS

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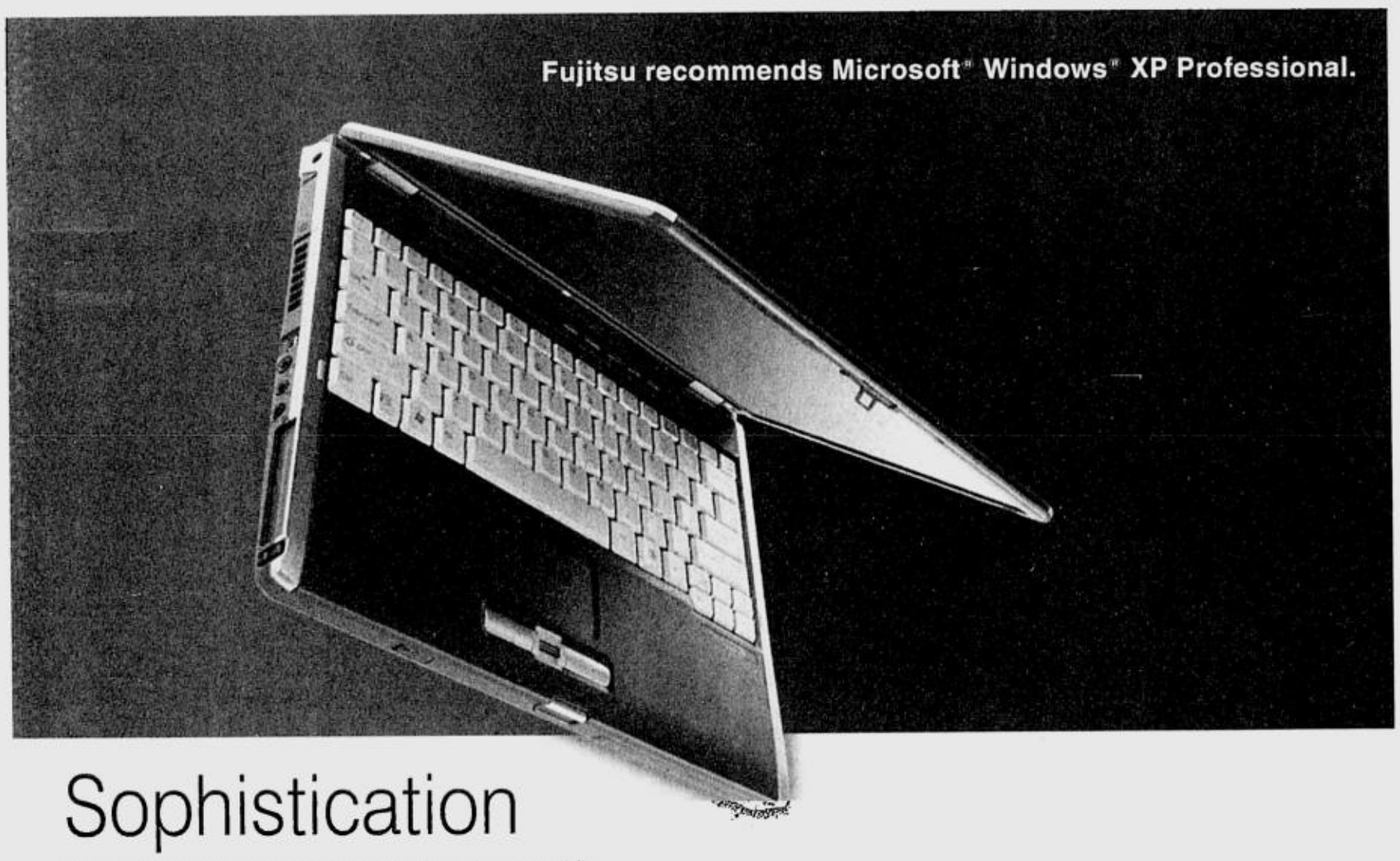

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World labor bodies to merge, resist globalization

GENEVA—Two major world labor union groupings on Friday set course for a merger to boost their struggle against what they see as growing worker exploitation as big companies tighten their grip on the global economy.

The link-up, expected to be finalized next year, will bring together the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labor (WCL), which together have 170 million members in over 150 countries.

"Widespread violation of basic workers' rights are the hallmark of the dark side of globalization," ICFTU general secretary Guy Ryder told a congress of his Brussels-based body at Miyazaki in Japan this week.

Willy Thys, secretary general of the WCL—founded in 1920 as a Christian workers' international—told the Miyazaki gathering that the merger would help combat "neoliberal policies confronting us throughout the world."

Link-up

Just before the congress wrapped up on Friday, it agreed that the ICFTU, with some 150 million members in 234 affiliated bodies in rich and poor countries, should go for the link-up.

One other global body, the Prague-based and once Soviet-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), claims 407 million members in 72 countries, but these include huge government-controlled groupings like China's ACFTU.

The merger move, already approved by a congress of the WCL whose members are mainly in developing countries although it is also based in Brussels, marks a growing radicalization of both bodies, once denounced by the WFTU as "capitalist stooges."

Both say unfettered globalization has allowed international corporations to switch production around the world to where they can get the cheapest workers—which means those on paltry salaries with little or no social protection.

This has undermined the advances made over a century by workers in rich countries, the ICFTU and WCL argue, and allowed employers to use the threat of job losses to destroy labor unions or minimize their influence on national policies.

"The protection from exploitation offered by trade unionism is the only real guarantee that workers will get fair treatment," said Ryder, a Briton. At the global level, this made unity vital to counter "the masters of the global economy."

United body

He also made clear that China would be a target of the new grouping. The communist Asian giant whose All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is the only labor body allowed "is effectively a union-free workshop," he said.

Ryder and Thys insist that a united body will be able to exert greater influence on the three bodies they see as at the heart of "neoliberal globalization"—the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

After standing aloof from openly left-wing political positioning for decades, both now support the World Social Forum—which began three years ago as an anti-capitalist gathering in Brazil but is building into a global movement. *Reuters*

Wall St. hopes for yearend Santa rally

NEW YORK—Wall Street is hoping its traditional year-end "Santa rally" will pick up steam this week.

But some investors worry that Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan just might play the Grinch on Tuesday with some tough talk to go with an expected quarter-point increase in interest rates.

For December so far, the blue-chip Dow Jones industrial average is up 1.1 percent, while the tech-laced Nasdaq Composite Index is up 1.5 percent, and the broad Standard & Poor's 500 index is up 1.2 percent.

"Investors remain very upbeat about the prospect of a year-end rally carrying into 2005," said Michael Sheldon, chief market strategist at New York brokerage Spencer Clarke.

"Probably the biggest thing this week is the Fed meeting," he added.

Wall Street would, of course, welcome "any comments they make that indicate the Fed may either slow down the pace of rate hikes, which I think is unlikely," he said.

On the other hand, stock investors hope that Greenspan & Co., otherwise known as the FOMC, will not "use language indicating they'll become more aggressive in raising interest rates, which I think is also unlikely."

In truth, markets will have a lot more than the Federal Open Market Committee's statement to digest.

A steady diet of economic data will include retail sales on Monday, the international trade deficit and industrial production on Tuesday, US fuel inventories on Wednesday, housing starts and the US current account deficit on Thursday, and the Consumer Price Index on Friday.

The overall CPI for November is expected to gain 0.2 percent, while the core CPI, excluding volatile food and energy prices, is also forecast to rise 0.2 percent, according to economists polled by Reuters.

What's more, earnings are expected from many high-profile companies, including two big investment banks, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc..

Results also are due from athletic footwear titan Nike Inc.; retailer Bed Bath & Beyond Inc.; business software maker Oracle Corp.; Adobe Systems Inc., known for PhotoShop and document-sharing software, and FedEx Corp., the world's largest express air shipper.

Just to add to the mix, next Friday, Dec. 17, is "triple witching" day, something that happens only four times a year, when contracts for stock index futures, stock index options, and stock options all expire on the same day.

This event is sometimes referred to as "freaky Friday" and on days like this, markets can be volatile in the final hour of trading.

Another factor probably will influence the stock market in the near term, in Sheldon's opinion: "On a short-term basis, the market is over-bought after the very strong advance following the US election" on Nov. 2.

For the week, stocks dipped, with the Dow down 0.46 percent, while the Nasdaq fell 0.93 percent, and the S&P 500 slipped 0.27 percent.

The price of crude oil, which has caused Wall Street weeks of sleepless nights, fell sharply on Friday. On the New York Mercantile Exchange, crude oil for January delivery dropped $1.82 to settle at $40.71 a barrel—down almost 27 percent from the record $55.67 hit in late October.

Earlier in the day, Opec ministers agreed to cut production by one million barrels per day, starting Jan. 1.

If the S&P 500 can hold above its recent low of 1,167 over the next few days, Sheldon said investors will become more confident because stocks will have been able to show resilience.

Tuesday's Fed meeting, though, is undoubtedly the week's main event. Some investors are hoping for even the slightest of hints that the Fed's "measured pace" of interest-rate increases could be slowed in 2005. Others think that is unrealistic. *Reuters*

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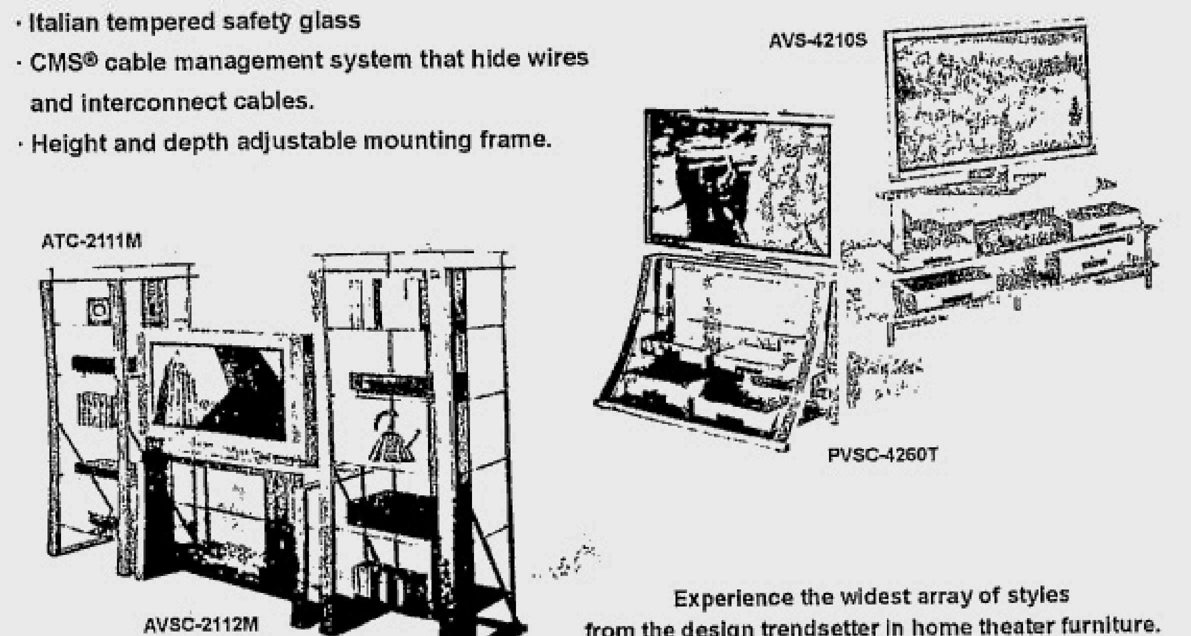

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Declining dollar good for equities

NEW YORK—You might be having second thoughts about that European vacation because of the weak dollar, but Wall Street doesn't think it's such a bad thing—at least not for now.

The dollar has lost more than 30 percent of its value against the euro over the last three years, and recently dipped to new lows. It has recovered somewhat from several weeks of selling, and was trading at $1.32 against the euro late Friday, but still remains quite weak; analysts say the downward drift is likely to continue in 2005.

Believe it or not, that's good news for many US stocks. While a sharp drop in currency valuations could jeopardize the financial markets by pushing interest rates higher and stock prices lower, the dollar's gradual decline has had mostly positive effects, said Lynn Reaser, chief economist with Banc of America Capital Management.

It's made US exports more competitive on the global market and slowed domestic demand for imports.

That, combined with a slow rise in interest rates, should help level off the nation's current account deficits, she said.

Stocks that stand to make the most gains from a feeble dollar include the major exporters, such as manufacturers and agricultural producers, as well as US-based companies with sizable overseas operations.

This is particularly true for the tech sector and consumer staples, such as household products companies, many of which have close to 50 percent of their revenues coming from abroad.

US companies competing on price in foreign markets—including those in the materials sector, such as steel producers—are also well-positioned.

For example, a US company selling a product in Asia may be able to capture market share from European makers.

This also bodes well for high-end luxury retailers: European and Japanese tourists are likely to splurge on pricey watches, jewelry, handbags and clothes while they're here because in terms of their own currency, these items are less expensive.

The chief downside of the sliding dollar is the concern that foreign investors might lose their appetite for US Treasurys.

If the dollar falls too rapidly in too short a time, foreigners are likely to grow concerned about holding US assets; they may stop buying, or worse, start selling them. AP

AT&T allies with Intel

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—AT&T Corp. said Friday it has teamed up with chip giant Intel Corp. to work on research and development and produce products together.

Both companies declined to disclose how much they are investing in the initiative.

The alliance comes at a time when telecommunications is increasingly converging with computing.

For instance, Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, is gaining in popularity as a means to make cheaper phone calls via the Internet.

As part of the agreement, which was signed six months ago, Intel will work together to produce a chipset that will allow AT&T to create services over Internet protocol.

For example, the chipset, which could find its way into cell phones, personal digital assistants and set-top boxes, would allow users to click on an AT&T icon to do things like make phones calls via the Internet.

AT&T researchers are developing a device dubbed "Office in a Box" which would allow small and medium-size businesses to gain access to data and voice services all in one place.

The device, which could be portable, would allow corporate customers to gain secure access to their networks and make Internet phone calls wherever they may be.

Intel spokesperson Mark Miller said the chip maker teamed up with AT&T as a way to boost its presence in the communications market.

The two companies are also working on developing products to extend the range of WiMax, a long-range wireless standard.

The chipset should be available in the next six to 12 months, said AT&T chief technology officer Hossein Eslambolchi.

On Friday, shares of Intel, based in Santa Clara, California, slipped 20 cents, or 0.9 percent, to close at $22.56 on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

Shares of Bedminster, New Jersey-based AT&T rose 37 cents, or 2 percent, to close at $19.15 on the New York Stock Exchange. *AP*

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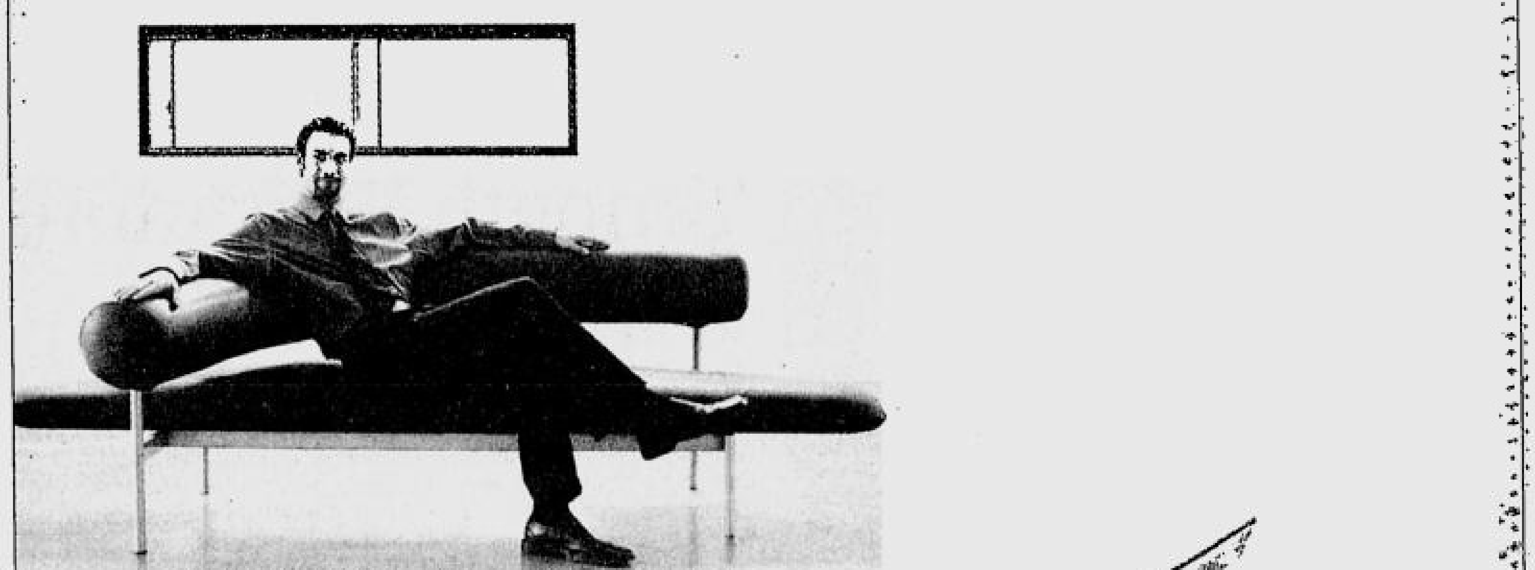

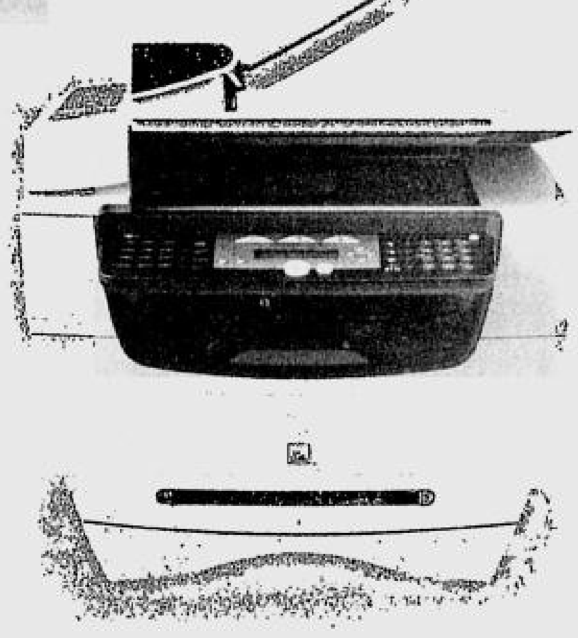

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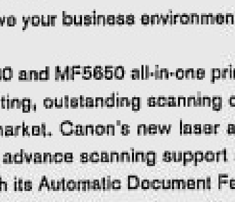

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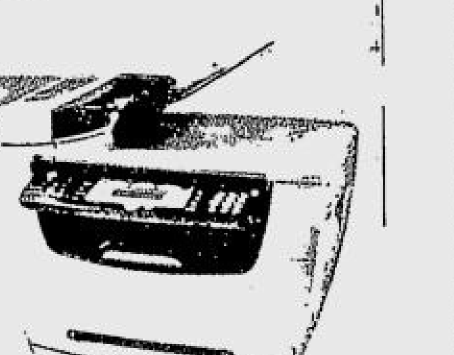

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People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

'Wonderful Christmas show' opens Dec. 16

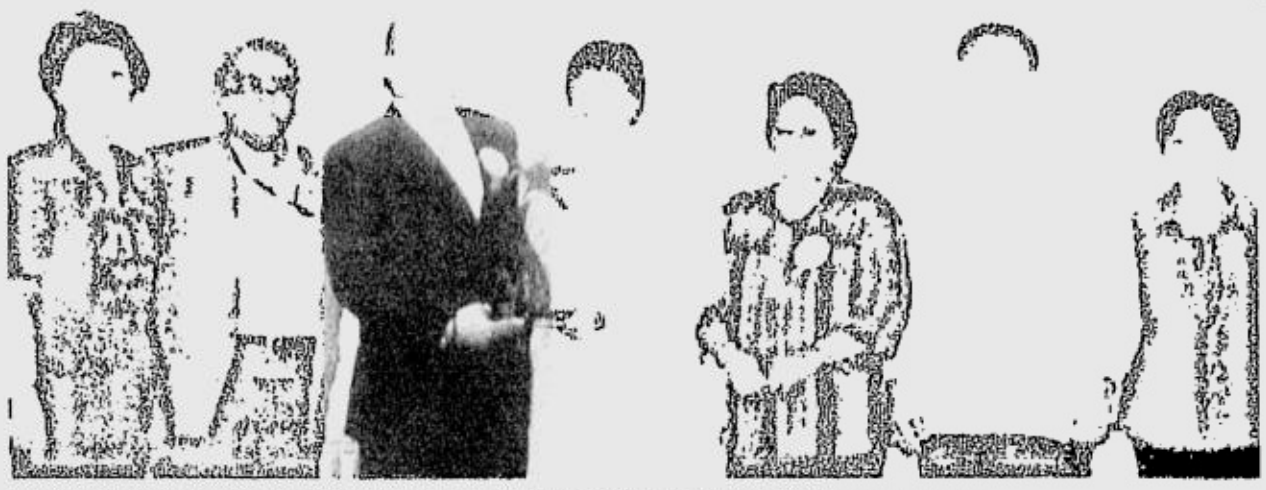
FOR THE last-minute shoppers out there, a one-of-a-kind Christmas show is set to draw shopping aficionados again this year to the SM Megamall. The 2nd Wonderful Christmas Gift and Food Show, back-to-back with The 2nd Great Christmas Toy Show, is slated from Dec. 16 to 19 at the SM Megatrade Hall 2.

Shop for unique gift items, personal accessories, leather goods, fashion articles, garments, delectable food treats, and the best toys in the planet from over 150 booths. It's truly a one-stop shop for exciting presents, toys and Christmas food treats, plus entertaining activities for the entire family.

There will be dance numbers from Enchanted Kingdom characters, Avon skin care and make up demonstrations, X-Trek Micro Racing, Super Yoyo Show, cooking demonstrations from Good Housekeeping, and arts and crafts Workshops from Crayola and Li'l Hands.

For the toy savvy, popular celebrities will feature, for the 2nd straight year, their favorite toys in the show's Celebrity Toy Museum. Among the celebrities who will showcase their prized toys are Ogie Alcasid, Michael V, Ding Dong Dantes, Melissa Gibbs and many others.

Some exhibitors at the show include Las Bordadoras, Aksesorya, and Smarty Toys. Sponsors are Smart Communications, M & M's, Maltesers, Snickers, Crayola, Li'l Hands, Super Yoyo, Simba, X-Trek Micro Racing System, Avon Color, Munky, Binondo Media Publishing, Puriflex, Little Tikes, Smart Parenting, Good Housekeeping, Yehey.com, Wave 89.1, Jam 88.3, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite, iFMm 93.9.



PASAR HONORED AS 2004 TESDA NATIONAL KABALIKAT AWARDEE

The Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining (Pasar) Corp was recently honored as the 2004 National Kabalikat awardee by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda). The Kabalikat Award is Tesda's annual institutional award that recognizes outstanding partners in the promotion and enhancement of technical education and skills development. The contribution can be in the form of training, sponsorship, donation of training machines and equipment, supplies and materials, recruitment and placement of trainees, on-the-job training, socially conscious industry practices, and other support services related to manpower development/technical education and skills. Shown is Ricardo G. Santiago, Pasar SVP for HRM and plant administration, receiving the award from Augusto L. Syjuco Jr, Tesda director general. He is assisted by 2004 National Kabalikat screening committee members Dr. Nona Saldana Ricafort, chair (left), lawyer Ranulfo P. Payos (2nd from right), Marta M. Hernandez, executive director, office of apprenticeship (right), and other Tesda board members.

FRENCH BAKER 'LEAVENS UP' WOFEX 2004

Bread, as the adage goes, is the nourishment of the soul. With the recent success of its baking workshop 'Let's Make Dough' at the annual World Food Expo (Wofex 2004), French Baker has proferred more than just baking tips to would-be bakers but also helped in leaving up the dough for a more evangelized community. Held at the World Trade Center and conducted by no less than French Baker chief Johnlu Koa, the workshop was participated in by about 80 baking enthusiasts. And as the hands-on workshop benefited those in attendance, all proceeds of the event were likewise turned over to the Mother of Life Center in support of the institution's evangelization programs and activities. Shown is Johnlu Koa (center) with the 'Let's Make Dough' workshop participants.

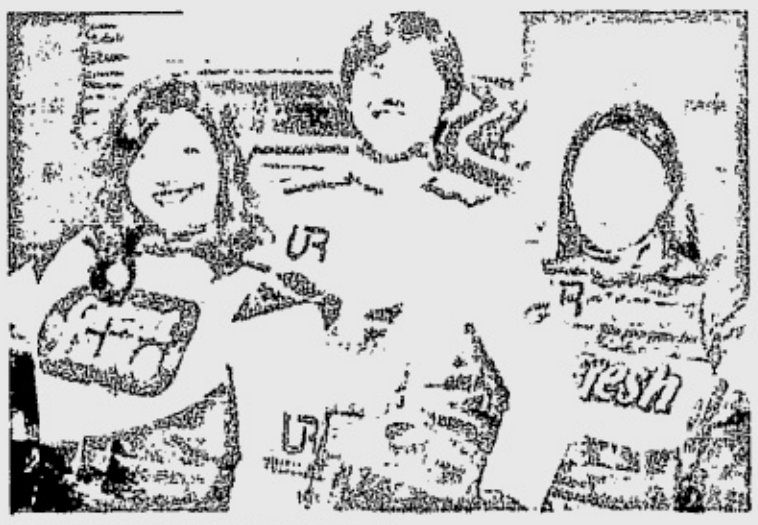
Cravings in West Avenue

THE SALAD Capital (Cravings endless helping of soups and salads), which recently marked its 16th year in the industry, opens another franchise outlet. The grant has been given to a young Filipino-Chinese businessman who, ever since, has been a "Cravings' aficionado" for its classic food and delectable desserts. Johnson Ng will be inaugurating his very own Cravings Restaurant and Bakeshop January of next year at the ground floor and mezzanine level of the Fortune Promenade Building, West Avenue, Quezon City.

Cravings West Avenue branch seats 150 persons with al fresco dining, has ample parking space, and is an ideal venue for functions such as corporate meetings and social gatherings.

With a strategic location near SM City North Edsa, residential communities and various institutions in bustling West Avenue, the new franchise is envisioned to be another success for The Cravings Group.

For inquiries, call trunkline 426-6681 local 104/118, or direct line 426-4838. Come and visit its other outlets at Katipunan Avenue, Tomas Morato, Shangri-la Edsa Plaza Mall, Robinson's Galleria, Metrowalk, Ortigas, Robinson's Place Ermita, Fraser Place Serviced Residence, and Festival Mall.



URC UNVEILS 'FORMULA 3'

Universal Robina Corp's beverage team recently unveiled its three hottest products with 'Race to Victory with Formula 3', an F1-racing inspired event indicative of the competitive nature of its latest bets in the market. First off is Great Taste Concentrated Coffee Granules with even richer coffee flavor in a new pack design. Also in the running is Refresh Flavored Drink in plastic cups, which comes in three varieties-orange, pineapple and dalandan-offering an exciting and more convenient way to enjoy fruit drinks. And lastly, the freshest brew on the block is C2 Cool and Clean Green Tea. Made from natural tea leaves, C2 has the right taste and formula for a healthfully refreshing and relaxing experience anytime, anywhere. Shown are the winning forms of Great Taste Coffee senior brand assistant Paulleen Soliman, C2 Green Tea brand assistant Carlo dela Paz and Refresh brand assistant Rhea Rosales during the recent launch of URC's latest bets in the beverage race.

'Smooth Sensations' at the Makati Shang

IT WAS a night of beauty, fashion, and smooth, flawless skin at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel last Wednesday, Nov. 17 when Veet, the international hair removal expert, held the formal presentation of its Top 8 Model Search finalists at the posh Rizal Ballroom A.

Titled "Smooth Sensations", the event started around 6 p.m., with cocktails and a short talk from Veet's charming cluster marketing director Tomas Tarcala, who introduced the product and explained how and why they saw a market in an Asian country such as the Philippines.

Commercial model and TV host Marc Nelson hosted the exciting event, as the eight finalists, Jessica Javellana, Christine Co, Audrey Ching, Kathy Leviste, Melissa Cruz, Hazel Aguilar, Kelly Ilusorio, and Love Cruz, got the chance to strut their stuff on the ramp via a fashion show directed by Cata Figueroa and styled by Millet Arzaga. The fashion show featured the different lifestyles of the women of today and showcased how Veet easily caters to each woman's lifestyle, from the career-driven ones down to the busy homemakers and future teen queens.

Out of the top 8, the one who best embodies the image of a Veet woman-smart, confident, and ready for life-will be chosen as the Veet Model Search winner and will receive an exclusive modeling contract from Elan Models International (Philippines), P50,000 cash and a one-year supply of Veet products.

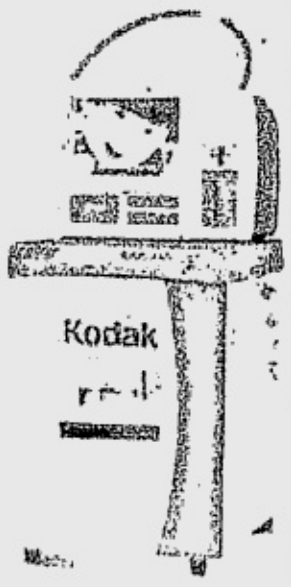
Readers of Cosmopolitan Magazine will also have a chance to participate in an online promo wherein they can guess which among the lovely candidates will get the most coveted prize. By simply logging on to www.cosmomagazine.com/veet from now until Dec. 31, readers can view the candidates' profiles and guess the winner. The first 50 to guess correctly will win Veet gift packs.

Truly a night to remember, the event surely raised the modern Filipina's awareness on their frisky follicle problems, because Veet made sure there is a solution. Those who were at the event were even lucky enough to go home with their very own Veet freebies so they could try Veet's Hair Depilatory products themselves.

ProductFILES

Kodak Digital prints in 12 secs

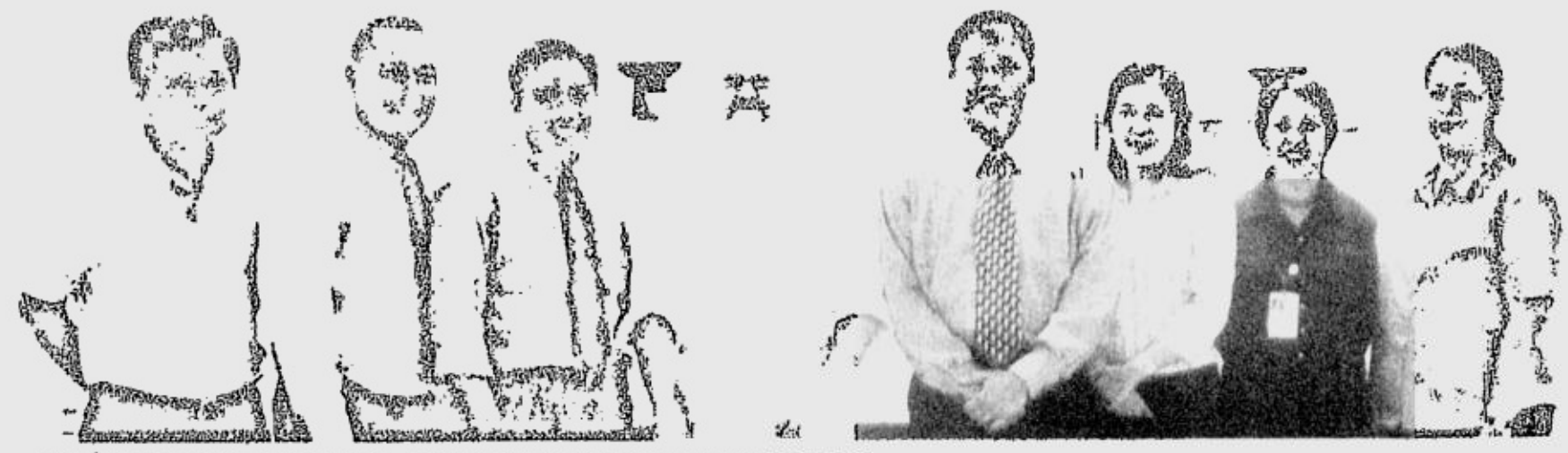
RECALL the time when you had to wait for days to have your pictures developed? How about when we all got excited when Kodak introduced the one-hour developing system? Kodak did not stop at that. Now it is introducing its latest product that can develop pictures in less than 12 seconds!



The new Kodak Picture Maker is Kodak's latest innovation in digital photo developing. It is the first self-service kiosk that processes your digital files as fast as 11.2 seconds per print, letting you print and share pictures in your mobile phones or digital cameras faster without having to go back to pick up your pictures after an hour.

Also, because the Kodak Picture Maker is consumer-friendly, it allows you to process your pictures on your own, no longer leaving your files to the care of the Kodak staff. Equipped with a touch screen interface, the Kodak kiosk works like a regular ATM machine. The step-by-step process is displayed on screen as a guide through the whole interface. It's as easy as preview and select until you have your printed digital images.

The Kodak Picture Maker can manage files from various digital sources from memory cards, CDs, and diskettes or pictures from infrared and bluetooth-enabled mobile phones. Furthermore, the Kodak Picture Maker can also burn digital images to the Kodak Picture CD.



NESTLÉ FOODSERVICES, PAL ATTEND STRATEGIC SUPPLIERS FORUM

Nestlé FoodServices recently presented its wide product range as well as its comprehensive systems and training support services to Philippine Airlines (PAL). The event was attended by Brad Santiago of Nestlé FoodServices, Bakeshop, Catering, and Convenience channel business head (4th from right), Francis Dy (2nd from left) and chef Toby Libarnes of Nestlé FoodServices (3rd from left), new PAL executive chef Ian MacKenzie (center) and other PAL executives.

More PEP on pages B13, H7, H8, and B2-6

PMA conducts special entrance exam

THE PHILIPPINE Military Academy (PMA) is once again calling all intelligent and able-bodied Filipino youth to grab the opportunity to have a noble profession, and a well-rounded college education at no cost, receive pay and allowances while studying in PMA, and the rare privilege to serve their Motherland. Philippine Military Academy applicants who failed to take the recently conducted entrance exam last Sep. 5 and all other interested and qualified youth can take the special entrance exam Dec. 29 in 19 testing centers nationwide. Interested applicants may proceed to the designated testing center a week before Dec. 29 to fill up necessary documents and undergo the limited physical exam (LPE). Applicants must bring with them the following on the examination day: a valid ID with photo, two pieces 2x2 ID photographs, 2 dark pencils, ballpen, eraser, and sharpener.

MI founder Gardner coming to Manila

WORLD-renowned American cognitive psychologist Dr. Howard Gardner is coming to Manila to give a lecture about how to raise smart children to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Gardner will speak before thousands of educators and parents from the Philippines and neighboring Asian countries during the First Philippine Multiple Intelligence Convention at the Manila Hotel on Feb. 11 and 12, 2005. The Harvard University-educated Gardner is the main proponent of the Multiple Intelligence (MI) Theory, which has revolutionized the intellectual education landscape in the United States and also in the Philippines.

MI veers away from the traditional way of gauging brainpower by rote memorization. It is an out-of-the-box learning process where each child is considered competent in his or her own preferred way of expression. Gardner has authored more than 20 books and hundreds of articles about the topic.

The convention, titled "Changing Minds: Teaching and Parenting for the 21st Century," is a landmark event of the Multiple Intelligence International School Foundation Inc, the company behind such revolutionary schools as Child's Place and MI International School. These are the first ever schools in the country to fully adopt the Multiple Intelligence (MI) framework advocated by Gardner.

Joy Canon-Abaquin, founder and directress of the Multiple Intelligence International School Foundation Inc, said the event will be attended by some 2,000 teachers, school administrators, parents and psychologists from the Philippines and neighboring Asian countries. He will also separately address the business community in a luncheon meeting with the country's business leaders.

Abaquin said this may be the first and only time Gardner will be in Manila. For inquiries, call 433-4948 or 433-4949, or e-mail admin@mi-childsplace.com.ph.

EWB INAUGURATES ANGELES PBC

East West Bank, now on its 10th year of growth and stability, recently opened another personalized banking center (PBC) in Central Luzon with the formal inauguration of its Angeles PBC. The Angeles PBC is the 2nd branch opened in Central Luzon, making it the 49th EWB branch. The first branch established in Central Luzon was the San Fernando, Pampanga branch in March 2002. The Angeles branch is located at 2014 Sto. Rosario Street under the supervision of branch manager Hermes O. Mayrina. EWB, armed with its vision to be the best full-service commercial bank in terms of profitability and efficiency, seeks to increase its total branch network to 77 PBCs by next year and to 100 PBCs within the next five years. Shown during the Angeles PBC launch were Peter Sheehan Reyes, roving teller, Kamilla Simpauco, sales associate, Magdalene Rose Ayson, new accounts, Teody Suarez, EVP, EWB, Mayrina, Simonette Cuyugan, service support, and Annalyn Salas, administrative assistant.

British Chamber of Commerce lauds SC's rule on Mining Act

THE BRITISH Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines welcomes the Supreme Court's decision that the Philippine Mining Act RA No. 7942 is constitutional. Geoffrey Short OBE, chair of the British Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines pointed that a great deal of positive discussion and debate has taken place over recent months between all interested groups and the foreign business community. This decision now paves the way for the Philippines to attract quality mining and natural resources projects within a stable fiscal environment.

"Well planned projects that show due regard to the environment will bring good quality sustainable employment to provincial areas and much needed inward investment to the country. Large-scale projects will bring together the best local and international expertise available for the wider benefit of the Philippines and its people. This decision is yet another statement that the Philippines is open for business and that foreign investors can develop their businesses with confidence," Short ended.

Bialetti Caffe opens new Makati outlet

HERE'S great news for all coffee lovers in Makati City's progressive business district.

With the opening of the country's newest addition to the growing coffee fad-Bialetti Caffe, Makati's young professionals will get the treat of their lives when they get to taste the world's leading Arabica coffee at the 7th floor of the Food Plaza, Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Avenue (beside Insular Life Building), Makati City.

Bialetti Caffe will provide its famous specialty Italian concoction of hot and cold coffee drinks and beverages, cold crepes and baked products for breakfast, lunch and dinner plus a 24-hour free-delivery basis, to leading firms and individual groups in the area that include call centers, gym fitness-enthusiasts, building tenants, and computer students, among others.

Shirly Limqueco-Chua, Bialetti's proprietress, said that the specialty coffee firm will also open another outlet at the SM Food Court II, in SM City Manila, and welcomes great franchising opportunities for interested individuals and corporate entities. Free info/data may be accessed via the e-mail bialetti_coffee@yahoo.com.

PASCUAL LABORATORIES PROMOTES POTENCEE

In line with its campaign to promote 'total protection against the colds and flu virus during the rainy season', especially among daily commuters and those who are always out in the streets, Pascual Laboratories Inc (PLI) recently donated raincoats for traffic enforcers of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA). Potencee is the Vitamin C brand of PLI-consumer healthcare division and comes in tablets of 500mg preparation (candy-coated and sugar-free variants) and drops/syrup in 100mg per 5ml. Shown, from left, are Marie Claire N. Carlos, sales and marketing manager of PLI-consumer healthcare division, Roberto V. Bautista, PLI business director for pharma and consumer healthcare divisions, MMDA deputy chair Cesar S. Lacuna, Manuel J. Salazar, PLI president and chief operating officer, MMDA Chair Bayani F. Fernando, MMDA traffic enforcers, MMDA general manager Robert C. Nacianceno, and PSSuperintendent Philmore Europa Balmaceda, group director of the Traffic Enforcement Group of the Philippine National Police.

2nd Philippine school administrators confab set

THE SCHOOL Administrators Circle of the Philippines, in cooperation with the Asian Psychological Services and Assessment Corp (Apsa), will hold its 2nd Annual Convention on Jan. 27 and 28, 2005 at the Traders Hotel, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

With the theme "Attaining Quality for Survival", the convention focuses on helping school administrators cope with the pressing problems in school administration amidst crisis.

Topics to be discussed are "Directions in the Philippine Economy-Implications for Education", "Total Quality Management", "Achieving Financial Viability: the Balanced Scorecard", "Effective Strategies for Promoting Educational Institutions", "Operational Strategies to Manage and Handle Collectibles" and "Understanding Regulatory Issues: Implications to Schools."

Bro. Andrew Gonzales FSC will keynote the convention. Other speakers are Dr. Benito Teehankee, Dr. Caesar Mansibang, lawyer Jocelyn Cruz and engineer Marl Ferenal.

For more details, call Apsa at 525-7238, 525-7277 or 525-7336 and look for Ciel, Teng, Nette or Coy, or e-mail apsa1688@pldtdsl.net.

TRINITY IN TOP 5

Trinity College of Quezon City president Dr. Josefina Swerte-Sumaya (left) receives a plaque of recognition from Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) chair Antonietta Fortuna-Ibe after Trinity-St. Luke's College of Nursing landed 4th in the recently concluded Nursing Licensure Examinations. Also shown is Philippine Nurses Association president Ruth Padilla.

Big tricycle group to use coco-based 2T oil

CONCERNED about the rising cost of petroleum products and the worsening air quality in the cities, the Aktibong Alyansa Ng Tricycle Operators & Drivers Associations sa Pilipinas or AANgTodaPil, an alliance of major tricycle federations in the country, has entered into a formal agreement with an oleochemical company for the use of a locally produced coconut methyl ester (CME) lubricant.

In a formal ceremony held recently in Quezon City, the national officers and National Capital Region chapter officials of the AANgTodaPil signed a memorandum of agreement with top executives of Senbel Fine Chemicals Inc and PhilTrak Inc for the sale and distribution of the CME-based Estrol 2T lubricant to AANgTodaPil members all over the country. The arrangement not only ensures the use of coco-based 2T oil for the fuel-oil mixture requirement of AANgTodaPil members but also livelihood opportunities and added source of income for the tricycle group.

Senbel Fine Chemicals Inc is the exclusive manufacturer of the CME formulated Estrol 2T oil and a leading oleochemical producer in the Philippines. It operates a plant in Lucena City. PhilTrak Inc is Senbel's national distributor for its CME products.

According to Senbel Fine Chemicals Inc vice president Segundo Santos, most of the lubricant available in the market today for 2-stroke engines commonly fitted on tricycles are mineral-based and have been found to produce emissions which can affect air quality and cause respiratory diseases.

"Our product meets the mandate set by RA 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 and conforms to the directives of the government on the use of CME products. On top of this, we are also here to provide livelihood opportunities to this tricycle group through the use of our Estrol product," Santos said.

For his part, PhilTrak Inc chair Francis Yuseco Jr said the partnership with AANgTodaPil also provides members of the association with a means to cope with the high cost of fuel by improving fuel consumption and engine performance of their vehicles.

The Estrol agreement is the first major undertaking of the AANgTodaPil leadership after holding a general election for its new set of national officers. Pablo Cantoria Jr now heads AANgTodaPil as its national president. He is concurrently the president of the Federation of Pasig City Tricycle Operators and Drivers Associations, which has over 14,000 members and 9,500 units. Norman Tandoc is AANgTodaPil's national adviser. Tandoc is also the secretary general of the Publishers and Editors League of the Philippines and NCR director of the Federation of Provincial Press Clubs of the Philippines.

AANgTodaPil is set to hold its formal oath-taking rites on Dec. 18. Representatives from the government, business, media and other sectors are expected to attend the event.

More PEP on pages B12, H7, H8 and B2-6

ProductFILES

Lip-smacking goodness

HERE'S a chocolate spread that will surely add a jolly mood to the common Filipino breakfast experience. Jolly Spreads gives you the natural taste of premium quality hazelnuts mixed with milk chocolate for that velvety smooth, melted chocolate-like texture that simply dissolves in your mouth.

Jolly Spreads is more affordable but with the same lip-smacking, chocolaty goodness of other popular brands. Perfect on bread, toasts and pancakes, it offers a good alternative to typical Filipino breakfast. Or, smooth it on breadsticks or crackers for a delicious, on-the-go snack. A glass of milk or juice is all it takes to complete this yummy treat.

Jolly Spreads offers three exciting variants to satisfy event the most discriminating chocoholics: Choco, Duo, and Swirl-blends that will definitely send your taste buds into chocolate heaven.

Imported from the world's chocolate capital, Belgium, the spread comes in the 400g jar, with a tamper-evident seal to retain freshness. Jolly Spreads is available at all leading supermarkets.

Canada pledges support to typhoon victims

THE GOVERNMENT of Canada has announced that it will provide humanitarian assistance to victims of typhoons Winnie and Yoyong, which ravaged several provinces across the Philippines last week.

Through the Canadian International Development Agency (Cida), Canada has pledged an initial CAD$250,000 (about P12 million) in assistance to victims of the typhoons. Funds will be channeled through international aid organizations such as the International Federation of the Red Cross and World Vision, and used to provide essential relief items to 3,000 households in Quezon and Aurora provinces. In addition, Cida has just approved funding requests for disaster relief and rebuilding initiatives through its local Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. More than P4 million will be released to the Infanta Integrated Development Assistance Inc in Quezon and the Central Luzon Center for Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation in Nueva Ecija.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew earlier expressed deep sadness over reports that landslides and flash floods in the eastern Philippines have claimed hundreds of lives.

"Canadians are shocked by the tragic loss of life and the enormous damage and suffering that have been wreaked by these events," said Pettigrew. "We extend our deepest sympathies to the people of the Philippines in this time of sorrow. Canada shares a close bond of friendship with the Philippines. All Canadians, including those of Philippine origin, are deeply saddened by the news of these natural disasters."

B14

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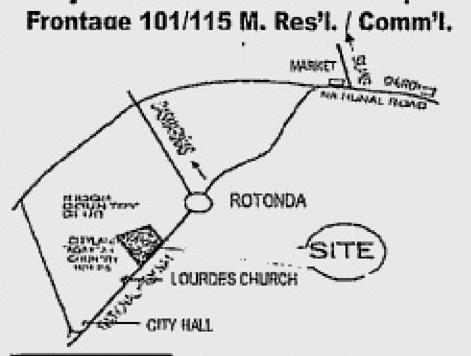

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I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

Zoila Tan Go

Mrs. Zoila Tan Go passed away on the 11th of December, 2004 at 10:50am at the Makati Medical Center.

She was born on the 25th of June 1925, enjoying a long life of 79 years.

Her husband James, son David and daughter-in-law Ramona; including grandchildren Constantin James, margaret Jane and Jenifer Jade were by her side when she passed away.

Her Body now lies at the Premier Chapel of the Mortuary and Crematory at the Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio Taguig. Cremation will take place on the 15th of December 2004, Wednesday, at 10:00am at the Heritage Park Crematorium.

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"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Psalm 27:1

Leonora Ong Co

now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and goodness of the Lord on the 11th of December 2004 at the age of 84.

She will be greatly missed by her children **Antonio** and **Elisa**, **Benjamin**, **Cecilio** and **Nette**, **Leila** and **Ben**, **Magdalena** and **Edward**, and **Norma**; and her grandchildren **Paul Anthony**, **Aison Benedict**, **Christopher John**, **Alvin Brian**, **Anna Lea**, **Michael Chester**, **Aileen Bernadette**, **Edric**, **Kelvin**, **Necille**, **Lorenz Albert**, **Freya**, **Ena** and **Anelisa**. Her family request the faithful to pray for the eternal repose of her soul. In lieu of flowers, donations to her favorite charities would be highly appreciated.

Her remains lie in state at Good Shepherd Memorial Park in Dolores, City of San Fernando, Pampanga. There will be a 9:00 a.m. Mass on Wednesday, December 15, 2004 at the San Fernando Metropolitan Cathedral followed by her interment at the Chinese Cemetery in San Jose, City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

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2. The Municipality of Patikul, Sulu as implementing partner of the DAR for ARCP, invites contractors classified and registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as Medium A or higher for similar contract to apply for eligibility and to bid for.

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1	Backhoe	1.0 Cu. M.
1	Road Roller	15 tons
4	Dump Truck	6 Wheelers
2	Concrete Vibrator	2 HP
1	Batching Plant	5.0 Cu. M.
1	Water Truck	2,000 Liters

- Deadline for Submission of letter of Intent and Eligibility Requirements : January 03, 2005
- Issuance of Bidding Requirements : December 28, 2004
- Pre-Bid Conference : January 03, 2005
- Opening of Bids : January 21, 2005

3. Prospective bidders should secure and fill up information sheets from the BAC Secretariat. Eligibility requirement, in sealed envelopes, properly bound, with all contents numbered consecutively and signed by the prospective bidder or his duly authorized representative must be submited to Ms Luzviminda Hayudini, municipal Planning Development Office, Municipal Hall, Taglibi, Patikul, Sulu.
4. Unless otherwise indicated in the instruction to Bidders or other bidding and contract documents, all particulars relative to the procurement and contract implementation shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A.
5. Bid documents will be issued to eligible bidders by the Bids and Awards Committee, Municipal Hall, Taglibi, Patikul, Sulu, upon payments of non-refundable fee of Php 3,000.00
6. The implementing agency reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government

(Sgd.) OMAR-HASIM G. LAKIBUL
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 13,16 & 23, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given of the loss of the following PLDT Stocks Certificates in the names of the following persons/entities as listed herein – 1) Jesus V. Tibayan: (0000090851 - 200 shares), (0000101458 - 100 shares), (0000101459 - 100 shares), (0000028950 - 180 shares and (0000131139 - 180 shares); 0000129639; 2) Palmy B. Tibayan – 350 shares; 3) Tibayan Mgt. Group Intl Holdings (0000140800 - 350 shares) and (0000149849 - 350 shares); 4) TG Asset Management Corp. (0000131277 - 200 shares), (0000153515 - 200 shares), (0000110212 - 200 shares); (0000110213 - 200 shares) and (000110214 - 200 shares); 5) Global Progress Mgt. and Trading – (0000142605) - 200 shares and (0000006118 - 200 shares); 6) Matcor Holdings Corp. (0000048436 - 200 shares), (0000048910 - 200 shares), and (0000048911 - 200 shares); 7) Diamond Star Management (00000157102 - 200 shares); 8) MSI Foreign Exchange - (0000160371 - 200 shares); 9) Las Piñas Construction (0000045710 - 200 shares); 10. Samson P. Martinez (P000020464 - 50 shares, (P000038226 - 15 shares), (PMO00014488 - 15 shares), (0000036863 - 60 shares) and (0000224548 - 180 shares) 11. Liborio E. Elacio (0000002862 - 180 shares); 12. Willrido Villahermosa (PMO0040797 - 50 shares), (PMO0041412 - 50 shares), (0000048031 - 180 shares) and (Sw0000209373 - 180 shares); 13. Roemel Mamuric (0000039659 - 170 shares); 14. Florencio L. Naguit (0000011455 - 130 shares), (0000025902 - 180 shares), (0000003576 - 350 shares) (0000003577 - 350 shares), 0000036384 - 180 shares and 0000039457 - (180 shares). If no contest received new certificate will be issued.

(PDI – Dec. 6, 13 & 20, 2004)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-MMSD 2004-022

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements.

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I	Jan. 11, 2005 10:00 A.M Kañao Room	Operation Materials for Oriental Mindoro Substation	PB041117-MMSB2061 (PB2)	3,687,900.00
II		Mechanical Parts for Marinawa DPP "CKD"	PB040831-MMAD1460 (PB2)	7,757,416.90
III		Mechanical Parts for Palanan DPP "Perkins"	PB05011-MMSB2316	2,475,100.00
IV	Jan. 11, 2005 2:00 P.M. Kañao Room	Mechanical Spare Parts for Masbate DPP "MAN B & W"	PB050111-MMAD2317	3,586,000.00
V		Mechanical Parts for Casiguran DPP "MAN"	PB050111-MMSB2318	1,950,835.00
VI		Turbocharger, IHI for PB120	PB050111-MMSB2319	3,000,000.00
VII	Jan. 12, 2005 2:00 P.M. Kañao Room	Rental for Mobile and Diesel Fired Generating Units for Pulang-lupa DPP	PB050112-MMVB2320	62,832,000.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I-VI	Dec. 27, 2004	2:00 PM	Kañao Function Room
Schedule VII	Dec. 21, 2004	10:00 AM	Pahiyas Function Room

Complete sets of Application Form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No. 9245357/9245477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP500.00 per schedule starting on December 13, 2004, from 8:30 to 11:30 A.M. only. No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by PSD/MMSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of Republic Act No. 9184.

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit – One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee – One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond – Two and a half percent (2.5%, penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI – December 13 & 20, 2004)

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INFOTECH

Editor Leo Magno

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Users urged: Fix your data, place them in data hub

By Leo Magno

AS more applications are used by enterprises and more data is generated, information technology users are seeing a mixture of disparate data sets that cannot be integrated with one another especially when a set of information becomes old. Information should thus be considered a corporate asset, along with management, labor and capital.

This was the message delivered by Oracle Corp. president Charles Phillips at the annual Oracle World conference held in San Francisco last week. To stress the point, Oracle for the first time held its technology conference together with its applications conference to highlight the importance of integration.

"Our entire strategy now revolves around the word 'information,'" said Phillips as Oracle unveiled a new tagline by calling itself "The Information Company."

Phillips said the industry has reached a point where "information age applications" are needed because of the multitude of separate data silos being generated by users. Information age applications, he said, provide data that is timely, complete, global and consistent.

"Five years ago we thought of rebuilding the data model and build applications around a data hub so that all your data would be consistent," said Phillips.

The hub would then act as a single repository of data that feeds live information to other applications and legacy systems in real-time.

ELLISON

Since the data is continuously synchronized, companies would then have timely information needed to make good business decisions.

The problem is often called the "master data problem" which leads to a hodge-podge of applications in a single enterprise and the problem of integrating all these disparate applications which use different languages.

These enterprise applications could be best-of-breed software from different vendors, leading to a heterogeneous mix that requires different patterns of usage. Worse, they could be in-house developed payroll or customer relationship management software. You end up with a collection of "Frankenstein" applications that need to be managed in your master data set, leading to an integration headache.

Oracle's master data set or data hub is called the Oracle Customer Data Hub. However, it is not alone in singing the data integration and data hub song. Oracle's chief rival, SAP AG, is also advocating the same architectural overhaul for the industry by pushing its own NetWeaver data hub.

Both Oracle and SAP claim to be the first to propose to the industry a master repository to integrate disparate enterprise data.

Yet there are others who can propose the same data hub in an effort to standardize information processes. Siebel, BEA Systems and even Microsoft Corp. can come up with their own data hubs. What would happen then to data integration if a company ends up using not one but two or more data hubs which all claim to be standard?

"Although you can buy other applications and place them in a data hub, ideally there should be only one data hub," said Mark Gibbs, senior vice president for applications of Oracle's Asia Pacific Division. "This doesn't preclude you from buying other applications but you have to keep all your data in one repository."

Gibbs said Oracle is tightly integrating its applications into the Oracle database and data hub, although the hub itself can still accept, update and synchronize data from non-Oracle applications.

The same message was given by Oracle CEO Larry Ellison. This time Ellison is not battling a competitor or an antitrust lawsuit. Ellison's newest foe is "information fragmentation."

Ellison has been talking about the abolition of disparate data in islands of information for years, and earlier this year he shifted to high gear when he talked about information fragmentation during a roadshow of the Oracle Customer Data Hub. This year at the Oracle World conference, the flamboyant leader of one of the world's biggest software companies sang the same tune albeit on a higher note.

"All the information you need to make intelligent business decisions should be stored in one place," said Ellison. "A single global database might sound like Nirvana, but how do we get there?"

Ellison said it took five years for Oracle as a global company to consolidate its information, and Oracle at that is supposed to be the expert on such processes.

"So it wasn't easy. But is there an easier way to get there? After a lot of thinking, I said 'yes.' The answer is the data hub. The underlying information about a business is chopped up and placed in hundreds of databases around the world. What if I need to know how much I spent yesterday or who is my best supplier or what is the status of my shipment? Is that information available? The answer is 'no.' It's not in one database."

The data hub, said Ellison, would consolidate data and solve information fragmentation.

"The data hub wasn't something we invented. We sort of discovered it. The single most important application now is the data hub, and it's the only way to get you to a single global instance. You need a 360-degree view of your customer," he said.

To create such a hub that would provide businesses with a single global repository, a network that would scale and not break or bog down is needed, according to Ellison.

"The only way I know how to build a system that would scale that much and not break is to build your network on top of a grid," said Ellison. "Don't use large computers; use clusters of low-cost computers that would scale horizontally."

Ellison is referring to grid computing, where computers, storage and the applications which reside on them are all interconnected to act as a coordinated pool of resources. Typically, grid networks use clusters of computers where new ones are added as demand increases, with the load going to the computing, storage or application resource that is most available. Whereas data used to reside centrally in mainframes or other bigger and "vertical" systems, today grid computing proposes the use of low-cost computers that share their load across the grid "horizontally."

This, said Ellison, would make the grid network more scalable as your data increases and users begin to consolidate information globally.

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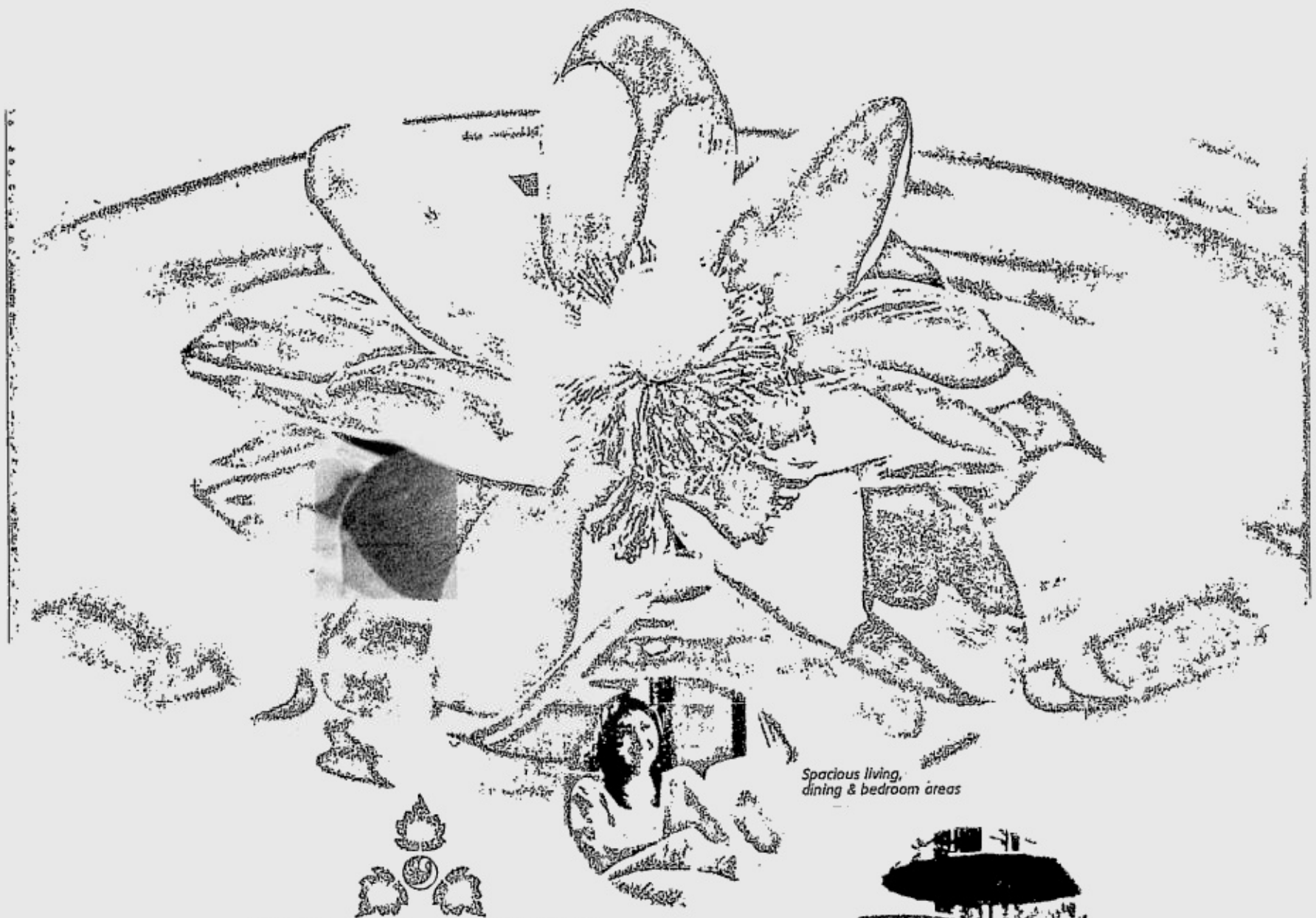

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Business Features Editor
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OPPORTUNITY IN CRISIS

Innovation key to beating disruptive changes

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

WE'VE heard it often enough: The only constant is change.

There are changes that are welcomed with open arms, and disruptive changes that corporations would avoid if they could.

According to Jose Jesus Roces, a professor at the Asian Institute of Management and president of the Asia Pacific Marketing Federation, companies that are caught unawares by these disruptive changes will be left biting the dust.

Roces told participants of a discussion organized by consulting firm Avanza Inc. that these disruptive changes are coming in more frequently, with more disastrous results.

He cited events such as the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States that almost killed the airline industry; the deadly SARS epidemic that claimed lives and halted travel in Southeast Asia; and abrupt changes in government that turned off a lot of investors.

These all led to severe swings in the global economy, from which many countries are still recovering from, including the Philippines.

Changes within industries may not be as serious as these events, but Roces said that changes are occurring nonetheless, foremost of which is the growing army of consumers that want more for less.

For Roces, innovation is the key to the survival of companies in today's world, which is characterized by a fierce competitive environment and the buying public's strong value-for-money orientation.

"To compete, companies must continually pursue many types of innovation aimed at existing and new customers," Roces said.

He classified innovations under three types.

Incremental innovations refer to small improvements in existing products and services.

Chip manufacturer Intel, for instance, is on a constant pursuit to make its microprocessors smaller and more powerful.

Architectural innovations, on the other hand, refer to changes in technology or process to change a component or element of the business, such as automation of factories.

Discontinuous innovations, meanwhile, describe radical advances that may profoundly alter the basis for competition in an industry.

One phenomenon is the launch of Viagra by pharmaceutical firm Pfizer Inc. that spawned a new, competitive market for erectile dysfunction drugs.

Roces said that companies ignore these changes at their own peril, for what works today will likely not work tomorrow, given the rapidly changing business environment.

Cited was the example of a drug store chain that used to lord it over the local market.

But because it did not move along with the times and stuck to its old ways of doing things, a more aggressive competitor entered the market and it became the Mercury Drug of today, a "category killer," according to the Philippine Retailers Association.

"There are opportunities behind every crisis and successful companies found those and took advantage of them," Roces said.

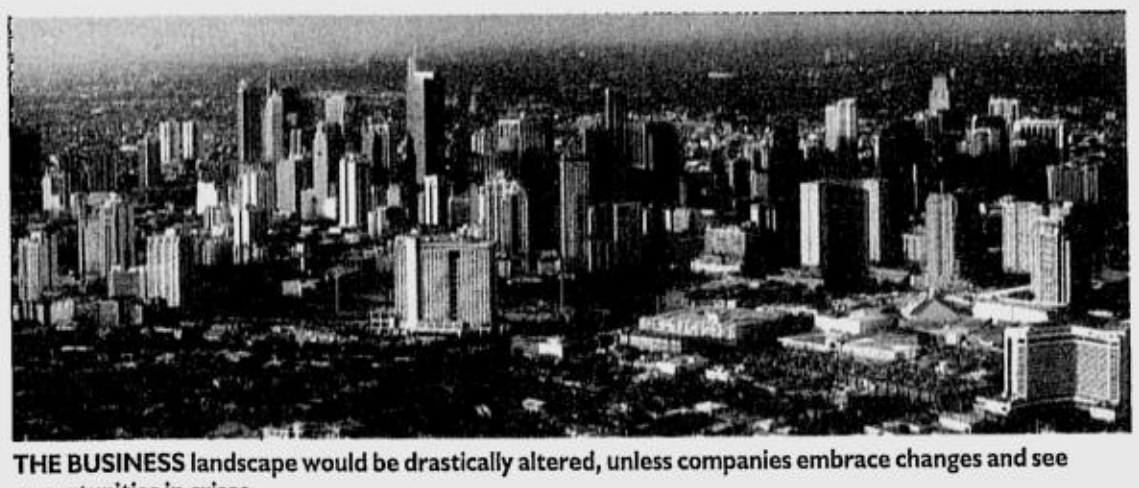
Another example was the Greenhills Shopping Center, which largely kept to its own devices for decades, while other malls sprouted all over the metropolis.

Determined to reclaim its old position in the retail industry, the Ortigas group installed a new management team to run Greenhills.

Changes were introduced and the shopping center has since seen its revenues go up by double digits every year, for the past three years.

Roces said companies would do well to keep an eye on these hidden opportunities.

They are there, he said, even in the bleakest of economic times.



THE BUSINESS landscape would be drastically altered, unless companies embrace changes and see opportunities in crises.

US retail sales below target

NEW YORK—US retail sales in the crucial run-up to the Christmas holiday period have been disappointing so far, but that may be because of consumers waiting until the last minute, an analyst report showed Friday.

Standard and Poor's Equity Research said November sales were "modestly disappointing, causing many retailers to increase promotional activity and some to lower earnings guidance."

The pre-holiday period is critical for most retailers, and many try to get a leg up in late November, with the kickoff of the shopping season in the Friday after Thanksgiving, sometimes called Black Friday.

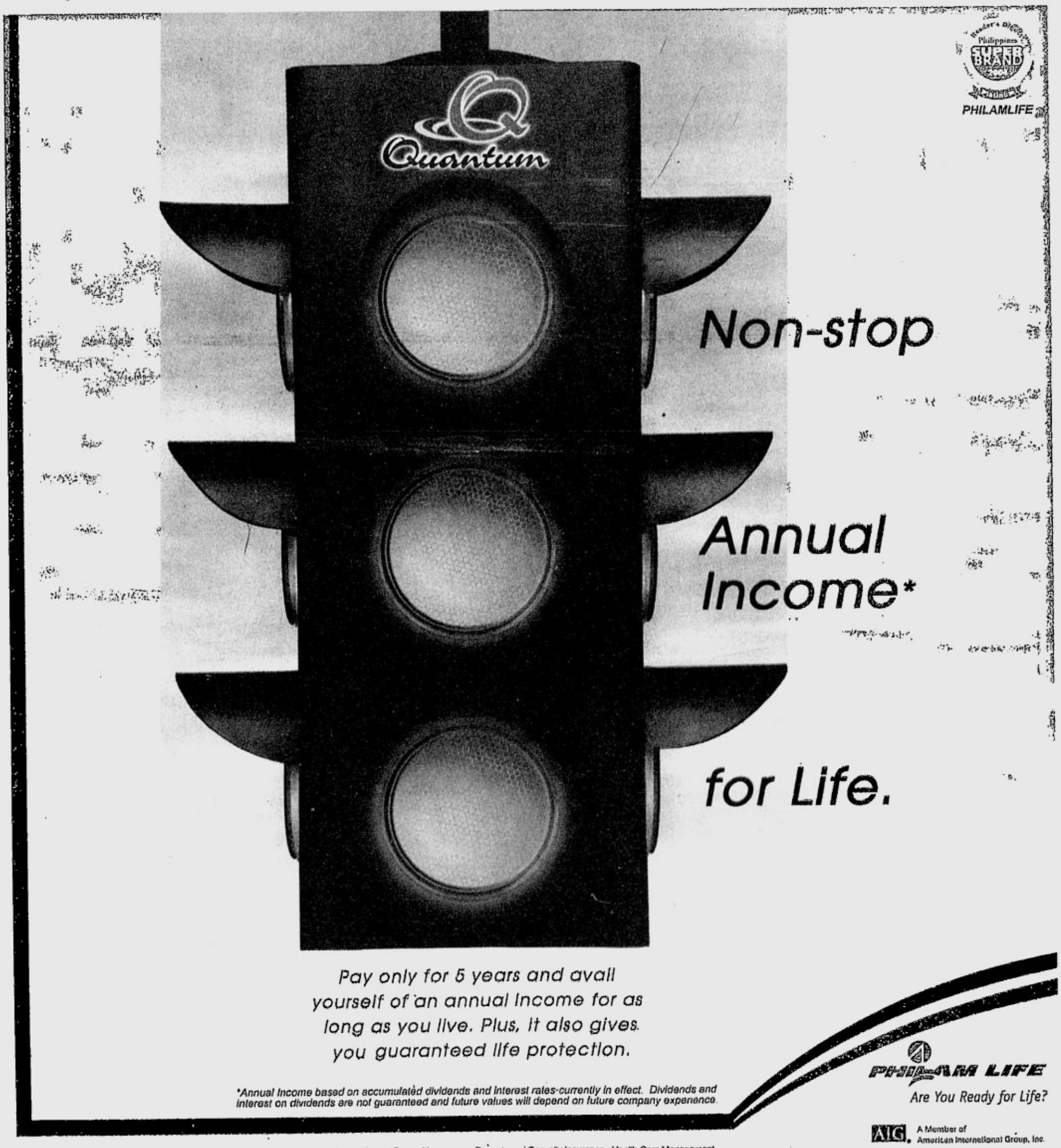
"S and P's equity analysts believe that, with December representing as much as 50 to 55 percent of fourth quarter sales for some retailers, the season is far from lost," the report said.

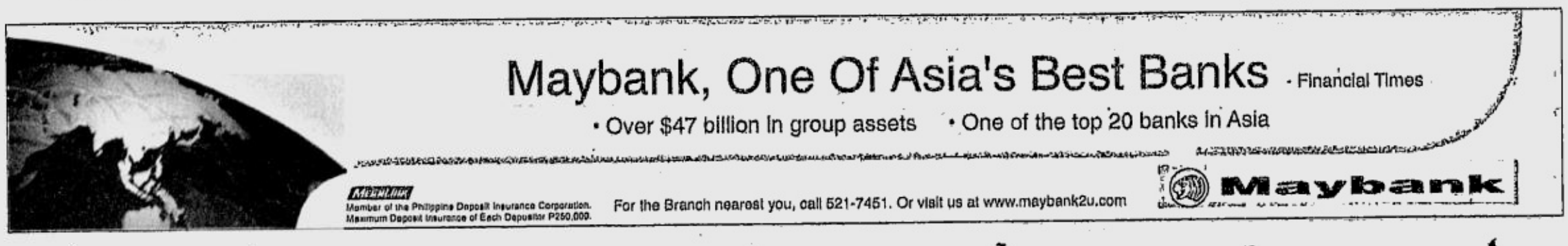
"Early December results ... were encouraging."

S and P said that its analysis of recent years "suggests that as much as 72 percent of business has yet to be rung up with as much as 35 percent occurring in the last two weeks of the year."

The report projects sales growth overall of about three percent and 25 percent growth

US RETAIL/ B2-3





Bank robberies and the national image

MAPping the Future

Mario Antonio Lopez
Peebee F. Balicao

BANK robberies are not the most serious of our banks' problems. Fraud, perpetuated with the help of some well-trained, well educated bank insiders, is the most pressing.

But, bank robberies are very dramatic. They make for sensational media stories. And some members of our media are prone to sensationalize their stories to sell copy and increase media's audience to sell programs to advertisers. This kind of sensational reporting has a negative effect on our country's international image.

The Asian Institute of Management Policy Center conducted a roundtable discussion on "Bank Robberies: Issues and Prevention" last Oct. 27.

Bankers, including officials from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, bank security officers, security agency representatives, representatives from the National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation, as well as members of the academe, took part in the workshop.

From January to September 2004, there have been 42 cases of bank robberies—up 13.5 percent year-on-year—13 of which happened in the National Capital Region.

Just before the last elections, in less than nine months, armed robbers made off with at least P63 million from some 26 local and foreign banks, reinforcing the perception that the robberies "were part of some political candidates' election fund-raising activities."

The typical targets were banks that had no alarm systems, no vault time-delay devices and had inadequate security personnel who were inadequately armed, poorly trained and badly motivated to do a good job.

The lack of video monitoring devices in bank premises and the reluctance of witnesses to testify hamper the identification and arrest of suspects. This is a major continuing problem for law enforcers.

Wittingly or unwittingly, the identities of potential witnesses are sometimes erroneously published and/or aired. This sad occurrence will inevitably result in the crime perpetrators being able to get to witnesses and discourage them from identifying/testifying, at the risk of death.

The experiences of members of the Bank Security Management Association (BSMA) suggest that neither the number of guards nor the number and sophistication of their weapons and support equipment deters the really determined robbers.

And even when trained security personnel with high-powered weapons are present, they are reluctant to use these because of the dangers posed on civilians, especially in highly populated areas.

This is also a major deterrent for the kind of "decisive use of armed intervention" many expect our police would exercise.

The fact is, while we wish for our police to be "Dirty Harrys," if and when they do with arguably good results but with some damage to property and human safety, we roundly criticize them. And the government cannot provide them the kind of legal support they will need if cases are filed against them.

There is also some doubt about the capacity of the Philippine National Police (PNP) to prevent or respond to bank robberies. The PNP is understaffed. It cannot assure consistent police visibility. The fact is that a number of our police officers do not inspire trust and confidence.

Quite a number have been linked to criminal activities. And compared to many of the more sophisticated gangs, the PNP, on the whole, is clearly underequipped and perhaps, not as well trained nor as deeply motivated.

The Joint Anti-Bank Robbery Action Committee's (JABRAC) Project Bantay Bangko inspects bank security devises and regularly monitors the banks' compliance with Bangko Sentral circulars.

BSP officials admit their inability to inspect all banks and their branches nationwide due to personnel and financial budget limitations.

Also prominently mentioned was the need to review implementing rules and regulations regarding the pursuit of anti-robbery measures. In the October seminar, there were a number of cases mentioned where implementing rules conflicted, negating the more effective pursuit of measures against robberies.

Effective information dissemination may prove to be a good countermeasure against bank robberies. Despite being understaffed and underequipped, the PNP can provide police visibility in susceptible areas to deter bank robbers. The PNP can start a hotline for bank alarms.

The participants gave several proposals:

1. Congress ought to make bank robbery a no-bail offense;
2. Licensing institutions must upgrade the requirements for obtaining security guard licenses; and
3. Media must exercise greater prudence and discretion in what they choose to print, publish and circulate.

Minimizing bank robberies, as with other criminal activities prevalent in our country, will result not only from having well funded, well trained, well equipped and dedicated personnel with good legal support from a rationalized legal framework.

It will also be the result of a responsible media exercising prudent management of its facts and reporting ethics. Civic minded citizens who care for their community and nation should likewise be protected when they assist in catching perpetrators—even at some physical risk to them and their loved ones.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the authors and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. Prof. Mario Antonio Lopez is professor of Asian Institute of Management and co-chair of the MAP Management Development Committee. Peebee F. Balicao is researcher at the AIM Policy Center. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

Movements

Simon Paterno is MAP president for 2005

SIMON "Mon" R. Paterno, managing director of Credit Suisse First Boston (Hong Kong) Ltd. Philippine branch, is the president of the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) for 2005. The MAP is a 54-year-old management organization whose 750 members represent a cross-section of CEOs, COOs and other top management practitioners from the top local and multinational companies operating in the Philippines. MAP also has some top management educators and government officials as its members.

Prior to joining CSFB in September 2004, Paterno was president/CEO of the Development Bank of the Philippines. Paterno spent 18 years with J.P. Morgan & Co., with stints in New York and Hong Kong. He has worked on the most significant financing and M&A transactions in the Philippines since 1990, including:

- The Republic of the Philippines Brady debt restructuring (1991), debut US dollar issue (1992), the Philippine Brady Exchange (1995), debut euro issue (1996).
- The mergers of Metrobank/Solidbank, Equitable/PCI Bank, BPI/Citytrust, BPI/Far East Bank; the acquisitions of Petron, Philippine Airlines, La Tondeña and the food business of Procter & Gamble.
- Bond and equity financings for San Miguel, SM Prime, Ayala Corp., National Power Corp., PNOC, PCI Bank, PNB.

In 1997, he was named managing director of J.P. Morgan, with responsibility for coverage of Asian sovereign clients at the start of the Asian financial crisis. He led the protest teams that advised the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (Ibra) and its Malaysian counterpart, Danaharta.

Paterno received his MBA from Stanford University and his AB honors Program in Economics, cum laude, from the Ateneo de Manila University. He is a 1999 TOYM awardee for investment banking. He has served on the board of the Bankers Association of the Philippines and as chair of LGU Guarantee Corp.

Other officers of the MAP for 2005 are Evelyn R. Singson, president of eBusiness Services Inc., as vice president; Jaime Y. Ladao, president of Dun & Bradstreet Philippines Inc., as treasurer; and Cynthia R. Mamon, president and managing director of Sun Microsystems Philippines Inc., as secretary.

The other members of the MAP board of governors are Nieves R. Confesor, professor of Asian Institute of Management, Francisco C. Eizmendi Jr., president and CEO of Institute of Corporate Directors, Francisco H. Licuanan III, chair of Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Napoleon L. Nazareno, president of Smart and PLDT, and Peter L. Wallace, president of Wallace Business Forum.

HSBC appoints new VP

HSBC recently announced the appointment of Isidro C. Alcantara Jr. as senior vice president and head of corporate and institutional banking for its Philippine operations effective Jan. 10, 2005. Alcantara, who was president and chief executive officer of the Philippine Bank of Communications (PBComm) for four years since 2000, will replace Andrew Tilke, who will be moving to a new posting in HSBC's regional headquarters in Hong Kong.

A certified public accountant, Alcantara graduated magna cum laude from the De La Salle University with a double degree in AB Economics and BSC Accounting. He took MBA units at the University of the Philippines and special courses at the Wharton School of Finance. Alcantara has been part of the local banking industry for close to 30 years, specializing in corporate banking. He was executive vice president and head of corporate banking for PCI Bank and Equitable PCI Bank for close to 15 years.

As head of corporate and institutional banking for HSBC, Alcantara will maintain the bank's leading position in this area, serving a range of customers, from multinationals to large local companies, as well as other financial institutions. He will also oversee the expansion of the commercial banking business as well as the continued integration of cash management, trade services and debt finance in developing customized solutions for this sector.

Helping develop world-class Filipino accountants

DALLY DUQUE: "It's part of my job to ensure that the firm, including its clients, complies with all the provisions and standards of accounting practice."

EARLY in 2001, the Auditing Standards and Practices Council (ASPC) embarked on one of its biggest projects to date: the adoption of all international auditing standards into local practice. The move was meant not only to broaden the scope of the existing auditing standards in the country, but also to help elevate Filipino Certified Public Accountants (CPAs), particularly those in public practice, to world-class level.

Helping realize these goals are seasoned CPAs and junior professional practitioners who facilitate the adoption of these standards in the changing landscape of audit and accounting in the country.

Dally Duque is one such CPA. As partner-in-charge of the Technical Group at public accounting and advisory firm Punongbayan & Araullo (P&A), Duque is the recognized authority on accounting and auditing standards and, naturally, the primary resource person when questions or issues arise regarding the newly adopted Philippine Standards on Auditing.

It helps that this University of the East (UE) alumna was handpicked by P&A chairman & CEO Ben Punongbayan, who also chairs the ASPC, to assist the Council in rolling out these new standards.

Duque explains, "As secretary of the Council, I handle the exposure of the new standards to the public for comments and, afterwards, organize and prepare the necessary information for the final adoption of the standards."

To date, except for the newly released pronouncements, the Council has adopted all the international auditing standards.

Duque's responsibilities in the ASPC put her in the perfect position to provide accurate and timely guidance not only to the firm's clients, but to its practice staff as well. "It's part of my job to ensure that the firm, including its clients, complies with all the provisions and standards of accounting practice," says Duque. "We are proactive about this as part of our professional integrity."

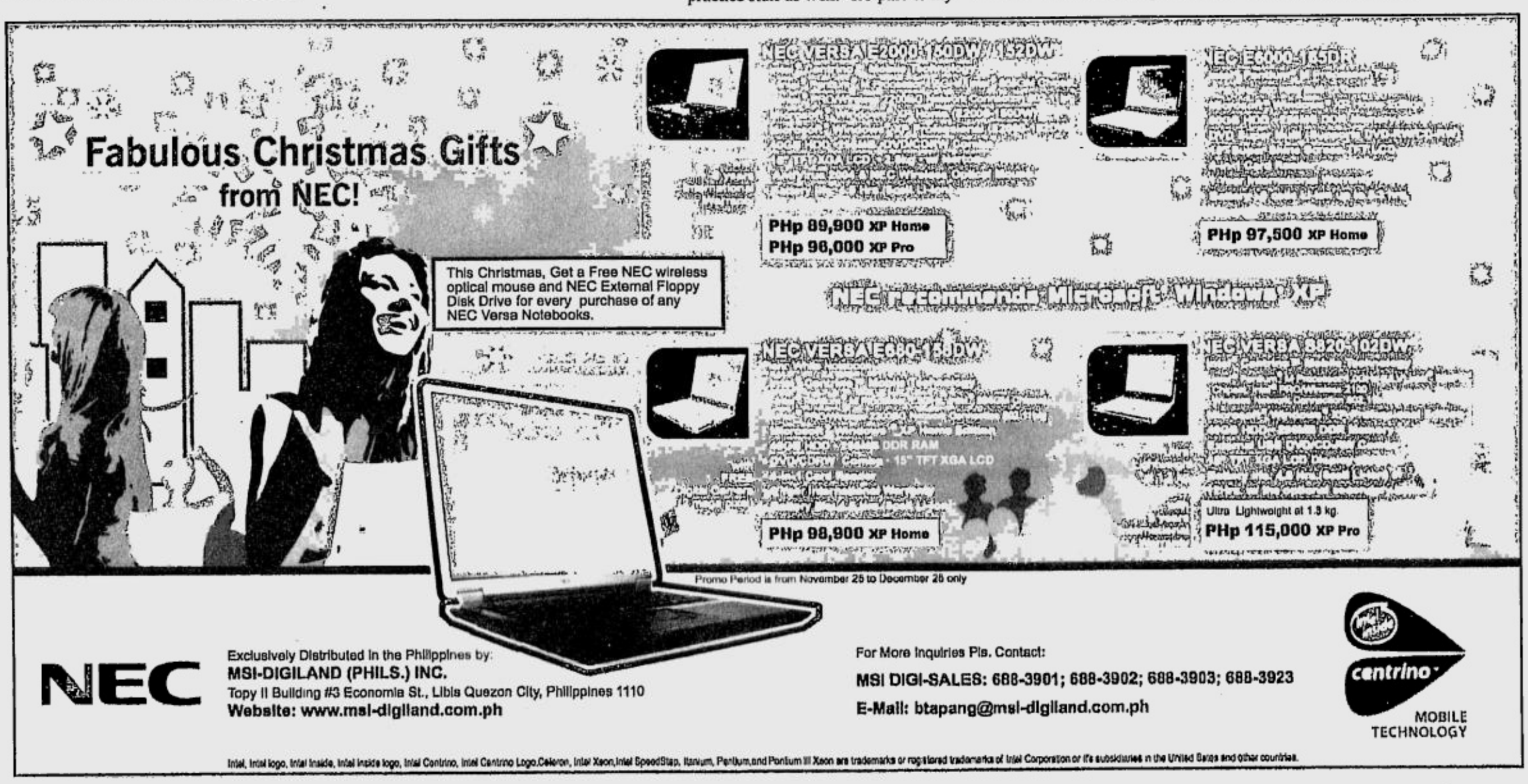
This mother of two sons developed her pluck through years of closely studying and understanding the practice of auditing. As an accounting major at UE, Duque was one of only 50 students from her batch to make it to the school's first honor's program class.

By the time she graduated magna cum laude, Duque was one of only 25 who managed to retain their full scholarship under the program.

Immediately after graduation, Duque joined a major auditing firm where she was assigned to the elite research division, an equivalent of P&A's Technical Group. From there, built on her knowledge of the practice by keeping a close eye on developments in audit and accounting standards.

The years she spent in research, supplemented by actual audit practice, provided Duque with the solid groundwork she needed to be P&A's "ethical compass," a huge responsibility that she takes on wholeheartedly.

"I enjoy my work," beams Duque. "I get to help clients resolve their problems and dispense helpful advice to P&A staff. It's all very fulfilling." More than that, Duque is playing a big part in developing a new generation of CPAs who meet the benchmark she established for herself: to have an unwavering and informed commitment to maintaining the global standards of their practice.



Real banking comes from the heart

ARAULLO

JOSE Araullo, chair of Real Bank is a 66-year-old battle-tested warrior in the banking industry, who is no stranger when it comes to turning things around.

He is one of two founders of Punongbayan & Araullo, one of the country's top auditing firms.

In 1984, Araullo became the president of one of the country's biggest savings banks, which experienced a bank run that same year.

"What we did was to intensify collections, agree to waive penalties, review interest rates, and run after delinquent borrowers. In no time, we became liquid. By 1988, we were earning P5-P6 million a month from a negative position, " Araullo beamed proudly.

So when he was asked to help manage Real Bank, he accepted the challenge. Araullo asked and was granted a free hand. "I need to do things my way if I were to run Real Bank. Many banks encountered difficulties because owners interfered."

When Araullo and his team composed of former top executives of banks, took over Real Bank, it was not without problems. "We took a second look on our deposit costs, reviewed our lending rates and instituted organizational changes. Initially, there were some resistance but changes we must do to achieve our goals. Now, I'm proud to say that we are very competitive in terms of rates and service to the clients. And I believe we are on the right path in improving our bank."

Formula for success

The formula was simple: "Do what you're supposed to do. Improve continuously on your service. Exert extra effort in collection and be firm in your principles."

Araullo also led by example. He arrives before 8 a.m. when work starts at 8:30 a.m. He didn't ask for any incentives to let employees know they are in difficult times.

"The bank was struggling, so we need to sacrifice to put the bank in order. Now, employees come early and leave late. We maximized resources; every bit of money we spend is spent wisely and properly accounted for," he said.

Employees are also given regular training in all aspects of banking. "The management team won't be around forever so junior managers should be prepared to take over. However, certain standards have to be met, and that they should keep up to their tasks," he adds.

Short and long-term plans

Strengthening the bank's capitalization, liquidity, and manpower are part of Araullo's plans, including an expansion in the Visayas and Mindanao areas in three years.

"The bank's niche is with the working class. We want to be known as the housing bank, catering to the housing loan needs of mid-income Filipinos, so we should grow in order to reach as many Filipinos as possible. Also in the plan is car financing and consumer lending," he said.

Real Bank started an advocacy campaign called "Bata... Bata... Mag-impok at Magsinop," in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) to foster thriftiness and the wise use of resources among elementary students.

In his team-up with the country's educators, Real Bank serves as Dep-Ed's benefactor in its values education program where the focus is teaching the children self-discipline for a much better and stable future.

"I believe that the country can be improved through education, and by espousing thriftiness, we can help mold the kids' character," Araullo relates. "At an early age, they should already be taught about the concept or significance of thriftiness or saving. It would instill in their young minds a sense of discipline because they would learn to deny themselves of material things that bring them short-term pleasure in exchange for something that will be of greater importance to them in the future."

Under the program, words like "mag-impok" and "mag-sinop" will be introduced. Even songs were composed to complement the teaching.

Initially, the program is implemented among 18 pilot schools in NCR, Region 3 and Region 4 but eventually the program will also be provided to other schools.

Hopefully, this would catch fire in all the other schools and throughout the nation.

Far-reaching, yet simple legacy

"I just want to contribute to the country's progress. I believe that the progress of our country is through discipline. If we have discipline, we will prosper. I'm just planting a small seed here, and through the program with the DepEd, hopefully it will grow and contribute to the progress of the Filipino and of the country," he boldly declared.

At 66 years old, with five sons who are all economically independent, Araullo said when he retires, he would bring all his books to Tagaytay and read them all.

That was his plan before, but then Real Bank came along and with the amount of work facing him right now, it seems the "reading" would have to be put on hold.

When he assumed the chairmanship of Real Bank, Araullo felt the need to "re-create" it with the objective of establishing its own name in the thrift bank industry. With expert marketing advice and subsequent guidance, the new The Real Bank, A Thrift Bank, with its new colors, logo and corporate identity is now being introduced.

The new logo of The Real Bank is a royal seal that encloses the "alibata" or "baybayin" script of the word "Real," which is actually royal in Spanish.

Alibata is the original Tagalog script being used by the natives in the 16th century before the Spanish colonization. The use of the "alibata" in the corporate seal is symbolic of The Real Bank going back to the roots of true Filipino service, that which is royal, pro-active, warm and efficient.

The new logo also comes with the new and more vibrant colors of red, yellow and blue all equally symbolic of the very significant transformations that the Bank is implementing within the next few months.

Araullo believes that this process of re-creating The Real Bank will kick off a new era of unique and very Filipino banking and he is determined to work this project through all his employees in all The Real Bank offices and branches for this new image to be visible to all their clients.

US retail sales below target

From page B2-1

in online sales.

But S and P expressed some concern about profitability with many retailers starting to cut prices in the wake of sluggish sales.

"While this strategy is meant to reduce inventory risk, S and P's equity analysts believe the longer-term implications are negative, as it can destroy brand image and create a commodity product, which sells based on price," the report said.

"After all, what consumer in their right mind will pay full price when a markdown is a week or two away?" *AFP*

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Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines

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VBL

VIRTUAL BUSINESS LEAGUE

The first virtual business tournament.

What is VBL?

Virtual Business League is an exciting business simulation competition which uses the principles and practices of entrepreneurship in a highly interactive technology-enhanced economy. The tournament is powered by a business simulation game called CAPITALISM II. The players, called BUSINESS WARRIORS will build or acquire their own companies and technologies and set their business in a real time virtual environment. The tournament will be participated by over 21 Colleges and Universities nationwide.

See your school's Business Warriors battle against the country's top colleges and universities.

Play the game.
Know the rules.
Be your own success story.

For more VBL update...log on to: www. petef.org.ph

Schedule of Events

January 08, 2005
Tune-up game
Venue: JITSE 3rd Floor Oppen Bldg. Sen. Gil Puyat, Makati City.

January 29, 2005
Inter-collegiate Tournament (semi-finals)
Venue: Market Market, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

February 12, 2005
The Pitch (finals)
Venue: The Poduim, Ortigas Center.

May 2005
Awards Night
NETW 2005 convention

Congressman Kintanar during VBL Press launch

Participating colleges and unversities

Undergraduate category:	TXTREPRENEUR SCHOOL CODE
Asia Pacific College	APC
Assumption College	AC
Ateneo de Davao	ADDU
Ateneo de Manila	ADMU
College of Holy Spirit	CHS
De La Salle University	DLSU
Don Bosco	DBTC
Emilio Aguinaldo College	EAC
FEATI	FEATI
Far Eastern University	FEU
PUP	PUP
Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila	PLM
Roosevelt College Cainta	RCS
St. Mutien	SMC
St. Scholastica	SSC
Saint Anthony College of Tech.	SACT
TIP	TIP
UE-Caloocan	UE
University of Rizal System	URS

Graduate category:
- De La Salle Professional Schools
- AIM

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- For every vote, the school gets one (1) TXTREPRENEUR vote.

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- A subscriber can vote for their school by downloading your school's SMS picture message or logo.
- To download a logo, text in VBL ‹school code› LOGO
- To download a picture message, text in VBL ‹school code› PIX
- Send to 336.
- Every download of any SMS content the school gets six (6) TXTREPRENEUR votes.

MMS Download
- A subscriber can vote for their school by downloading an MMS wallpaper.
- To download an MMS wallpaper, text in VBL ‹school code› MWALL
- Send to 336.
- Every download of any MMS content the school gets six (6) TXTREPRENEUR votes.

"It is with ICT that the Philippines will have its mark in a highly competitve global environment"

Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
President of the Philippines

"This innovative idea should bring as many steps closer towards the fulfillment of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's commitment in her 10-pt. agenda to support 3 million entrepreneurs and create six to ten million jobs within the next six years.

Cesar Purisima
Secretary
Department of Trade and Industry

"ICT development becomes more important as the world becomes smaller with the inter-link of domestic and global markets through the emergence of information age. ICT has become a vital component to sustainable economic development."

Mar Roxas
Senator
Republic of the Philippines

"On-line gaming has taken one bold step forward. With the Virtual Business League, it has evolved into a teaching tool."

Simeon Kintanar
Congressman
2nd District, Cebu

"The Virtual Business League is a meaningful, educational and entertaining activity. We encourage the business schools to pick it up and make it part of their curriculum"

Dr. Ben Teehankee
President
Philippine eLearning Society (PeLS)

The Virtual Business League is a good project to raise the awareness of our young people on the value of the Internet..into something more productive that eventually will help them in terms of moving towards entrepreneurship.

Hon. Virgilio L. Pena
Chairman
Commission on Information and Communications Technology

"Much like the role being played by telecommunications as a linking component among businesses fostering economic growth , the Virtual Business League can be a powerful leverage for our youth as they enter the entrepreneurial arena."

Hon. Ronald O. Solis
Commissioner
National Telecommunications Commission

"The Virtual Business League, we see this as a perfect way to get our citizenry to practice becoming entrepreneurs before going out into the real world"

Hon. Angelo Timoteo D. De Rivera
Director-General
National Computer Center (NCC)

"All games are serious"

Vic Reventar, PhD, OR.
Faculty
Ateneo de Manila University

PETEF 2004 Officers Oathtaking in Malacanang with Pres. GMA.

Sec. Pena during PSIS 2004

35 years of supporting the industry.

What is PETEF?

The Philippine Electronics and Telecommunications Federation popularly known as PETEF is the umbrella organization of the electronics, telecommunications, broadcast, information technology, internet industries as well as equipment manufacturers and suppliers in the Philippines.

- Commited to create an environment of unity within the industry.
- Lead partner of the goverment in the formulation of national policies, goals and objectives of the industry, responsive to the country's economic, cultural, social and political fabric.
- Lead organization of the industry that supports technological advancement and innovation in its field, fosters self-sufficiency and exhorts adherence to standards.

PETEF is participated by 18 member associations, 76 corporate members and 25 associate members such as Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP), Integrated Telecommunicatons Suppliers Association of the Philippines (ITESAP), Information Technology Association of the Philippines (ITAP), Electronics Industries Association of the Philippines (EIAPI), Philippine Cable TV Association (PCTA), Philippine Internet Service Organization Inc. (PISO), and Philippine Chamber of Communications (PCC).

For more inquiries:
Contact #s: 813-6398 / 759-3870
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Editor Aries Espinosa

PIA 72nd annual confab to coincide with 10th Worldbex

THE PHILIPPINE Institute of Architects (PIA) schedules the date of its annual convention from March 14 to '18, 2005 to be able to participate in the Philippine World Building and Construction Exhibition (Worldbex), which marks its 10th year.

With this move, exhibitors of Worldbex and PIA Annual Convention will save money, time and resources because they need only mount one event as they both cater to the same target market.

Architect Delfin Pantangco Jr, PIA vice president for administration and convention chair, expects a milestone in Worldbex 2005 slated from March 16 to 20, 2005 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila and the adjoining Philippine Trade Training Center. PIA's 72nd Convention venue is at the Westin Philippine Plaza Manila, CCP Complex, Pasay City.

Pantangco believes that PIA's presence in the 10th Worldbex will be beneficial for the two organizations and the exhibitors. He adds, "It's a very good timing for Worldbex to celebrate its 10th anniversary with somebody it started with."

PIA is the oldest professional architectural organization in Asia. Since its organization in 1933, it has been instrumental in the development and growth of the architectural profession. It has a direct hand in institutionalizing the practice and it boasts of members who are pillars of the building industry.

Major sponsors and exhibitors have welcomed PIA's decision this early, while the response of PIA's other friends in the industry has been very enthusiastic. "I told our friends you will not exhibit in our convention, we'll just meet you in Worldbex," declares Pantangco.

He points out that PIA as an organization is not joining other similar conventions aside from Worldbex. "This announcement should clear that up," says Pantangco.

The change of convention date also benefits PIA's provincial architects, who for some will be viewing a world-class international construction material exhibition for the first time. In Worldbex 2005, PIA architects will also be given a chance to showcase their works for local and international audiences.

"Adjusting our convention date to coincide with Worldbex will be our way of wishing them well and good luck."

FAIR FOCUSES ON HOME OFFICES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, IT ROLE

The increasing economic role of home-based entrepreneurs, professionals and freelancers whose operations are largely aided by information technology was brought to the fore during the recent first Small Office Home Office fair organized by Protégé Inc. Shown during the Soho fair opening were, from left, Isabelita Palanca, chair of the Women's Business Council Philippines, which was the fair's women's sector partner, Mel Alonzo, chair of the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp, Jay T. Ranola, marketing communications senior associate of Epson, the fair's co-presenter, and Ruby Villavicencio Paurom, Protégé president. The fair showcased successful women entrepreneurs who started small and operated from corners of their homes. It also put under one roof sellers of business equipment, solutions providers, marketers of telecoms innovations, schools offering IT courses and entrepreneurship, and providers of auxiliary services as printing, design and audio-visual requirements. For more updates, visit www.rubycomm.com/protégé_soho.

GARDENIA CREATES TEMPTING TREATS AT WOFEX 2004

Bread leader Gardenia participated as one of the presenters in the World Food Expo 2004 (Wofex) recently held at the World Trade Center. Gardenia was invited by Little Wing Production, one the event's media partners, to demonstrate a sandwich preparation during the event. Wofex is a yearly event that brings together all the latest types of food, beverages, and world-class food machineries, packaging materials and premium ingredients from all around the world. Gardenia is the only bread manufacturing company in the country to receive the ISO 9001:2000 and HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control point) certifications for product quality and food safety, and just recently, was awarded the Superbrands status by Superbrands Asia. Gardenia offers a wide array of great-tasting and innovative breads. Shown are Gardenia nutritionist April Cunanan with host chef John Cu-unjieng of ABC 5's 'How 'Bout My Place?' creating a mouth-watering Gardenia chicken and bacon sandwich.

Too much fast food bad for health

ELSIE'S idea of lunch is hamburger and a glass of soda. Being a typical young professional, she is one of those people who always need to beat the clock and, therefore, relies on fast-food chains for a quick meal. Undoubtedly, she is one of the many people hooked on what is now known as the fast-food culture.

Because of the prevalent fast-food culture, there is now an increasing incidence of diabetes and cholesterol problems. Unhealthy eating habits have been associated with modern living. In a time when everybody tries to beat their deadlines, lunch or dinner often means a quick bite in fast food chains, which offer fatty and oily food.

This results to too much fat in the diet. According to Sanirose Orbeta, a member of the American Dietetics Association, a regular burger contains 255 calories, while big servings contain 500 calories. French fries, though they are made with potatoes, which is supposedly healthy, is equivalent to 220 calories.

Eating too much of these foods can lead to abnormal cholesterol levels in the body, a condition known as hypercholesterolemia or dyslipidemia. Dyslipidemia is one of the leading causes of cardiovascular diseases.

Efforts to improve dietary patterns could markedly decrease morbidity and mortality associated with chronic health conditions. However, there are some cases when dietary changes are no longer enough to control the increasing levels of cholesterol in the body. When this happens, physicians recommend the use of drug intervention as an adjunct to diet.

Among the drugs known to lower cholesterol level is fibrates. Fibrate, particularly fenofibrate, is used with diet changes (restriction of cholesterol and fat intake) to reduce the amount of cholesterol and triglycerides (fatty substances) in the blood. It is especially good at lowering triglycerides and a form of cholesterol called very-low-density lipoprotein (VLDL).

Fenofibrate has also been shown to delay the progression of atherosclerosis (thickening of plaques on the blood vessels) among patients with diabetes.

In the Diabetes Atherosclerosis Intervention Study (DAIS) published in The Lancet, it has shown that patients who took fenofibrate had a 40-percent decline in the progression of atherosclerosis compared to those on placebo.

The results of DAIS provide important data with significant implications for patients with dyslipidemia, particularly those with diabetes. The outcome of the trial indicates that fibrate therapy is an important therapeutic option as a primary or adjunctive therapy in the treatment of diabetic dyslipidemia.

Patriot Pharmaceutical Corp, a Filipino-owned pharmaceutical company, will soon launch a new and affordable brand of 200 mg. fenofibrate in the market.

Fenofibrate is a drug that should only be taken upon a doctor's advice.

NESTLÉ CABUYAO HOLDS TREE-PLANTING

The employees of the Nestlé factory in Cabuyao, Laguna led by factory manager Pat Garcia, corporate environment officer Jess Garcia and site environment officer Edwin Ramos, together with their families and friends held their annual tree-planting activity recently in the mini-forest at the back of the factory. Employees from the Nestlé Center and the Nestlé factory in Lipa, Batangas and students from the Pamantasan ng Cabuyao also joined the activity. This is the 4th year that the factory has conducted such an activity.

ACN Davao gears for 50th year

THE ASSUMPTION College of Nabunturan (ACN) officials led by its school president met recently with the board officers and directors of the Assumption College of Nabunturan Alumni Association Inc to discuss a joint project undertaking in connection with the 2004 Grand Alumni Homecoming scheduled on Dec. 19 at the school's main campus in the capital town of Nabunturan, Compostela Valley Province (previously Davao del Norte).

The ACN Grand Alumni Homecoming organizing committee 2004 has finalized various projects, plans and programs directed towards making the 2004 homecoming the grandest reunion of ACN alumni in a long, long time. It promises fun, prizes and surprises for everyone and hopes to make it the standard by which all subsequent alumni homecoming celebrations will be measured and remembered.

All ACN alumni are enjoined to call as soon as possible their respective batch representatives, or they can call and inquire at the ACN AAInc secretariat at (084) 376-0607 so you can update your contact information and alumni database.

In the Visayas, alumni of Assumption College of Nabunturan, Davao may call and inquire further from Joel Reterba, alumni president, at 0919-4607994, or Eddie Diva at 09228-062050; (032)-2344597/414-4321.

NEW ZONTA CLUB PRESIDENT

United Nations Representative Deborah Landey (5th from left) was guest speaker of Zonta Club of Greater Rizal II and the Filipino-Chinese Federation of Business and Professional Women of the Philippines. The event coincided with the election of Susana de Jesus as incoming president of Zonta Club Region II. Shown are the new officers (from left) Unap director Nenet Ang, ZCR2 president Susana de Jesus, NCRFW chair Myrna Yao, Deborah Landey, Fil-Chi Federation EVP Rosalind Wee, Zonta International president-elect Olivia Ferry, Zonta International director Dandy Gomez, and District 17 Lt. Gov Virma Vergel de Dios. With them is Ana Senga of the United Nations (standing 2nd from left).

More PEP on pages H7 and H8

ProductFILES

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For more details and distribution opportunities, call 740-6099 or 742-6887.

Philips Group of Companies:
Actively Building Partnerships for Socio-Economic Development

For Philips, from the days of its founders, doing business and helping to build a community are two things that always run hand in hand.

Sustainability is the principle that drives the company to improve the lives of everyone it touches worldwide, from its employees and stakeholders to its business partners and customers.

This policy is upheld by Philips Philippines in all its various business divisions -- Philips Consumer Electronics, Philips Medical Systems, Philips Semiconductors, Philips Lighting, and Philips Domestic Appliances.

Med Mateo, President and CEO of Philips Philippines, says: "At Philips, we are passionately committed to helping improve the lives of people. We see no difference between doing business and sustainable business. And we achieve this every day by bringing meaningful technology innovations that focus on lifestyle, healthcare, and enabling technologies."

The company continues to invest significant financial, technological and human resources for a better quality of life for Filipinos. Philips' long-term presence and commitment manifest today in several partnership programs on healthcare, education, and technology, benefitting most especially the underprivileged in society.

Philips Global head Gerard Kleisterlee and Asia-Pacific head Andreas Wente (3rd and 4th from left) with the Philips Philippines management team: (Seated from left) Philips Semiconductors Assembly and Test Organization(ATO) SVP Ger Schonk; Philips Phils. President and CEO Med Mateo; and SVP for Human Resources Management of Asia-Pacific Thomas Stassen; (Standing from left) Philips Semiconductors Philippines, Inc. Cabuyao Gen. Mgr. Steven Brader; Philips Semiconductors Calamba Gen. Mgr. Melba Cuyahon; Philips Consumer Electronics Gen. Mgr. Angelo Valenton; Philips Lighting Gen. Mgr Mario Hernandez; Chief Finance Officer Daisy Enriquez; Philips Medical Systems Senior Manager Butch Soriano; Human Resources Senior Mgr. Nerissa Berba; and Philips Semiconductors Sales and Marketing Mgr. Jun Sa. Ana.

Enhancing Education and People

The Philips Education and People (PEP) program has been making significant contributions to the education system.

In 2001, Philips and the Department of Education set out to build a Philips Educational Center in each of ten pre-selected public schools. Equipped with Philips products such as a TV, VCD player, VHS player, educational audio-visual materials, and computer units, the Philips Educational Centers are designed to be one-stop electronic libraries for learning and data gathering. Through the Adopt-a-School program, the company also provided basic computer education to the students of Casile Elementary School in the remote Cabuyao district.

At the turnover of a Philips Educational Room were (from left) Assoc. of Barangay Councils President Anacleto Montaño, Philips Senior Mgr. for Human Resources Nerissa Berba, Carasucht Elementary School Principal Ruperto de Borja, Philips Corporate Communications Officer Maria Santos, Philips Pres./CEO Med Mateo, Boying Remulla, and Philips Calamba Human Resources Director Reynaldo Dizon.

PSPI Gen. Manager Steven Brader assists a pupil on a PC.

To build fruitful careers and enhance the development of knowledge in the semiconductor market technology, Philips also supports the Centers for Technical Training Excellence (CTTEX) and the UP Los Baños Diploma in Electronics Process Engineering Course programs. The company has also been offering college scholarships for employees, their dependents, and other deserving students from reputable universities in the country.

Papaya Schoolchildren pose with (from left) Philips Philippines Pres. Med Mateo, volunteer teacher Katherine Thompson, Royal Netherlands First Sec. for Commercial Affairs Ric Hettinga, and school founder Craig Burrows

Furthermore, Philips joined several other companies to establish the Advanced Research Competency Development Institute (ARCDI), which will be built at the Northgate Cyber Zone in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Advancing Healthcare In the Government

Through its latest project, the ORET-Philips-DOH medical assistance program, Philips is able to advance the ties between its mother country, The Netherlands, and the Philippines.

DOH Sec. Manuel Dayrit (4th from left) with (from left) Philips Medical Systems Regional Mgr. Thomas Mueler; DOH Undersecretary Antonio Lopez; Philips Phil. Pres. Med Mateo; Philips Medical Systems AP CEO Michiel Manuel; Philips Medical Systems ASEAN Regional Director Lee Weng Seong; and Dutch Embassy Commercial Attache Ric Hettinga.

A Dutch financing program called "Ontwikkelings Relevante Export Transacties" (Development Related Export Transactions) or ORET has paved the way for the delivery of an extensive number of medical equipment and related services facilitated by the Department of Health and supplied by Philips Medical Systems.

The equipment range from medical imaging, non-invasive diagnostic, operating room, monitoring, recovery, haemodialysis, and bronchoscopy tools, all intended to bring quality health care services to benefit millions of Filipinos.

Philips Medical Systems will also develop E-Care, an online referral structure that allows for interconnection among the hospitals involved. This will enable an individual hospital to view and share studies with the other hospitals, speeding the flow of knowledge throughout the medical enterprise and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of people and organizations.

The ORET program will not only significantly enhance healthcare services nationwide, but will also foster better relations between the Philippines and The Netherlands. It's another exemplary model of how Philips' Sustainable Business practice creates a much wider positive impact even beyond national borders.

Awarding the Most Promising Inventions

To encourage, support and give due recognition to the efforts of young scientists and inventors, Philips launched last November 2003 the Most Promising Invention Award in cooperation with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The award is to be presented annually to outstanding Filipino talents in different fields of expertise during the Department of Science and Technology's National Inventors Week.

Philips Most Promising Invention awardees from UP Rural Highschool pose with (from left) Philips Consumer Electronics Customer Service Manager Joni San Miguel; Philips Semiconductors Director and Business Fulfillment Manager Vito Aguinaldo; DOST Secretary Dr. Estrella Alabastro; and DOST Undersecretary Rogelio Panlasigui at this year's National Inventors Week

The Philips Most Promising Invention Award is a testament to Philips' strong and sincere commitment to develop and support Filipino talent and reinforces Philips' reputation as a socially responsible citizen.

Cash prizes and Philips products are presented to the winners as forms of encouragement to the business, government and scientific communities to share in the vision of transforming the nation into a more globally competitive technology-based economy.

Philips Medical Systems Senior Manager Butch Soriano (left) inspecting one of the inventors' entries together with DOST Sec. Estrella Alabastro.

"At Philips, we are passionately committed to helping improve the lives of people: We see no difference between doing business and sustainable business. And we achieve this every day by bringing meaningful technology innovations and focusing on lifestyle, healthcare, and enabling technologies."
--Med Mateo, President and CEO

Giving Shelter to the Homeless

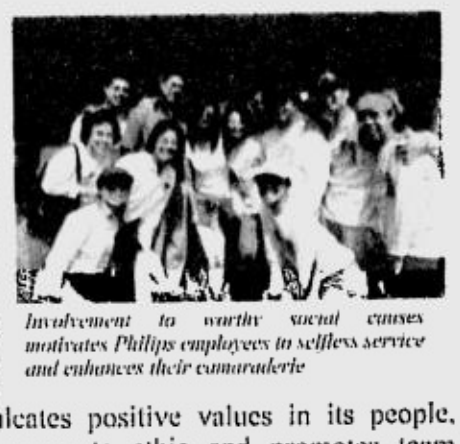
In support of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) movement, the nationwide, multi-sector solution to our blatant problem of poverty, Philips employees have volunteered to build the GK Philips Village of 100 houses at Barangay Barandal in Calamba, Laguna, for families that would be affected by the extension of the South Luzon Expressway.

Philips Global President and CEO Gerard Kleisterlee hands over a certificate of house and lot ownership in the GK Philips Village to one of the squatter families in Calamba.

In doing so, both organizations hope to help in the economic development of the Southern Tagalog region by facilitating the transfer of the people in the path of the Highway Extension; and help the residents build a beautiful, peaceful and productive community by building decent homes and providing opportunities.

The GK Philips Village volunteers are all smiles in facing another full day of work.

Philips believes that peaceful environments and productive communities rebound to the benefit of those who do business in the locale. Working in a cause-oriented organization also inculcates positive values in its people, enhances the whole corporate ethic and promotes team building.



Involvement to worthy social causes motivates Philips employees to selfless service and enhances their comaraderie

A Heritage of Good Corporate Social Responsibility

Since its foundation in 1891, Philips has conducted its business in an economically viable and socially humane manner, long before "Sustainability" became a byword of modern business. The founding belief of brothers Gerard and Anton Philips was that by daring to make choices that improve the lives of people both inside and outside the company, they would be successful not by coincidence but by design.

Gerard and Anton Philips: advocates of excellent employee care

Today, Philips continues to put much importance on its thousands of employees in each of its plants and offices across the globe. By creating a winning environment where people share a sense of pride, purpose and motivation, Philips is able to maintain its technological edge. Its guiding values sum up its success: Delight customers, Deliver on commitments, Develop people, Depend on each other.

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SR 1.8 GAS A/T	896,000	100,000	67,342	46,416	36,782	26,500	21,622	18,335	17,196
GSX 2.0 GAS A/T	847,000	100,000	62,921	43,370	34,371	24,763	20,205	17,131	16,067
GLX 1.8 GAS A/T	807,000	90,000	60,215	41,505	32,895	23,699	19,337	16,395	15,376
GL 1.8 GAS M/T	698,000	80,000	51,500	35,349	28,023	20,189	16,473	13,963	13,096
DLX 2.4 DSL M/T	690,000	80,000	53,242	36,698	29,063	20,938	17,084	14,496	13,596
DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (12.07%)	663,000	80,000	48,583	33,173	26,301	18,948	15,460	13,103	12,290
DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (50%)	663,000	331,500	27,625	18,417	13,856	9,890	8,037	6,776	6,336

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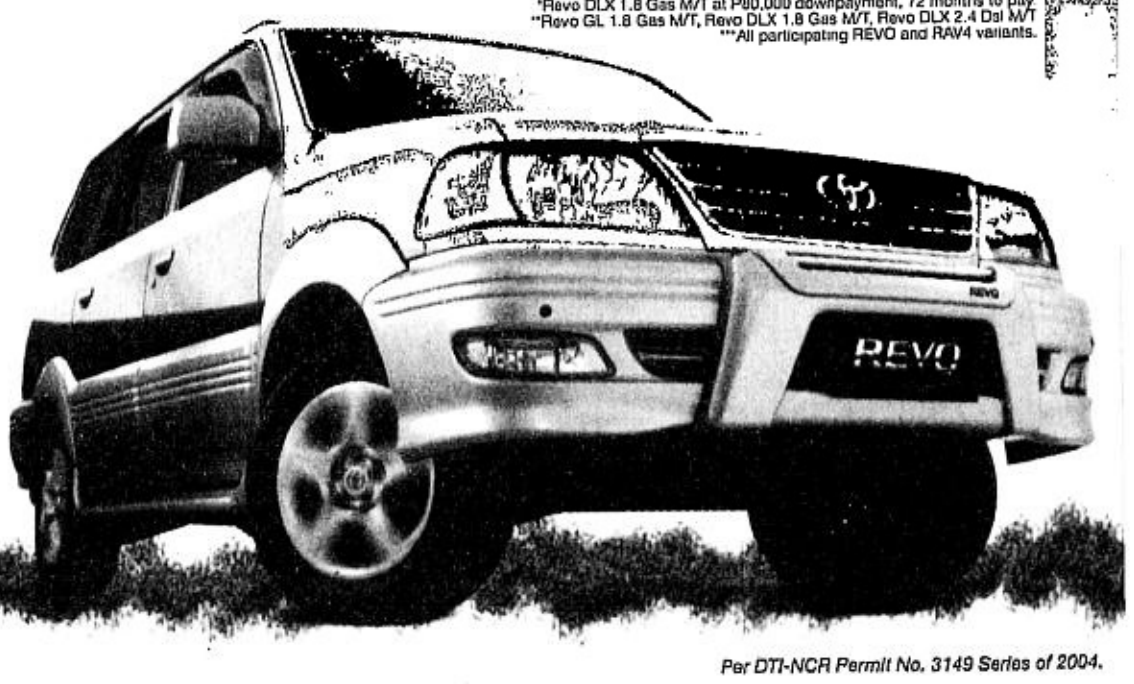

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BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

EVENTS MARKETING

Make consumers think choco drink while running a race

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

IF YOU happen to pick a Nestle product in a grocery store and a fair-skinned man approaches you and engages you in a conversation about your choice, chances are that is Eugenio Simioni, the marketing director for grocery and SVP of Nestle Philippines Inc.

Eugenio belongs to that rare breed of marketing executives who still goes to the consumers to learn about their shopping habits and who gets a thrill when somebody buys his products. "It's still very exciting to see people buy your products."

"Everything starts and ends with the consumer," says the Swiss-Italian who adds he tries to go to all the outlets where Nestle products are sold including the wet market and *sari-sari* stores. This, despite being a top official of a huge multinational who has several managers under him.

Eugenio says he would approach customers in a grocery who pick Nestle products and interview them as to why they chose his products and how do they use it.

Knowing why consumers buy your goods and how you use it are crucial to a marketing person, he states.

THE MILO Marathon is one of the longest-running events marketing program in the country.

His habit of approaching people and talking to them about their purchase stemmed from a mentor of his at Nestle. As a young apprentice, he recalls a VP of the company telling him "never be afraid of selling."

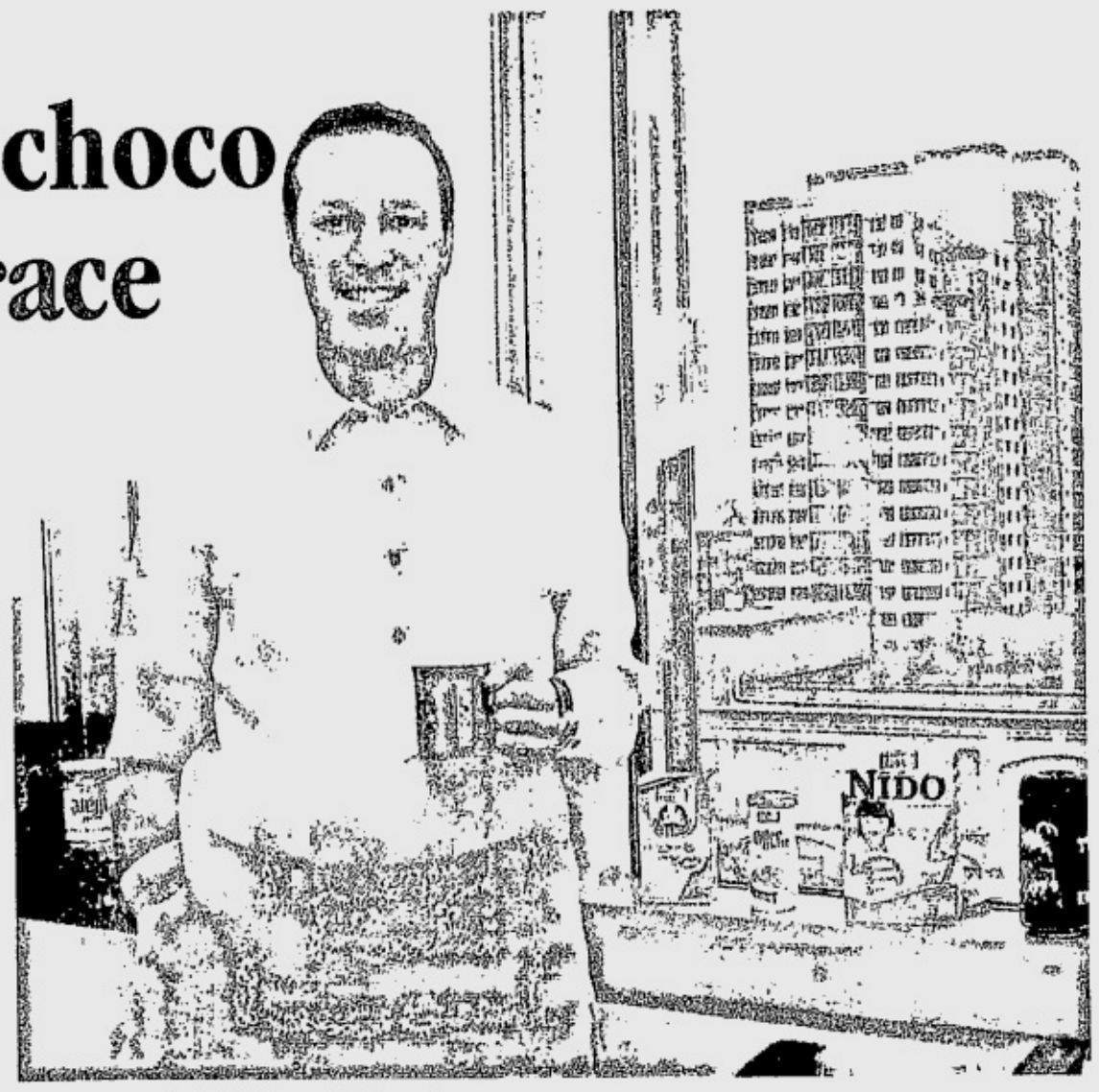
Operational audit

Eugenio joined Nestle since he graduated from a university over a decade ago. As a young graduate he was assigned to work in Nestle Philippines for three months in 1991 to do an operational audit. That meant sifting through the company's systems and checking whether they comply with Nestle standards. He had actually been interested in marketing while in school but says his marketing professor was so traditional in his teaching he was not inspired to pursue the course.

So he pursued economics and accounting instead. But after two years doing auditing for Nestle he was given a chance to go into sales which he found "more interesting and exciting."

Think global, act local

Today, as marketing director of Nestle Philippines, his task is to take care of 25 brands with about 300 SKU s (store keeping units) in all. SKUs use are variants of a brand like there is Nestle ice cream the brand and one flavor is one SKU.



EUGENIO Simioni's job is to sell 25 brands

But unlike some multinational firms which adopted global or regional advertising strategies, Nestle continued to "think globally and act locally."

"There are no global consumers. We maintain a local flavor to the things that we do. It is our way of communicating and marketing our products."

Events marketing proved to be a very effective way of marketing some of Nestle products in the Philippines. It is a big component of the firm's marketing mix for certain brands. And although they also do events marketing in other countries, no two events are exactly the same.

"We do events because it is meaningful to the consumers and we are able to convey the meaning of our brands," says Eugenio.

But unlike firms who sponsor events thought of by another organization, Nestle prefers to generate its own events.

One of their most successful events marketing program is the Milo Marathon, now on its 28th year. This year's marathon was the biggest with 100,000 participants.

Value association

Eugenio explains the value association they want for the brand is energy, achievement through sports, discipline and respect.

Another classic Nestle event is the Bear Brand kite flying fes-

MAKE/ B3-2

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SyCip Salazar is top IP law firm in RP

SYCIP Salazar Hernandez and Gatmaitan, the country's largest law firm, was recently adjudged best intellectual property practice in the Philippines in the first Asialaw IP Awards presented in Hong Kong.

The firm bested nine other competitors through a selection process combining legal market polls, extensive editorial research and nominations from a judging panel of 113 leading in-house counsel.

Llewellyn L. Llanillo, head of the firm's IP department, received the trophy at ceremonies held at the Ritz Carlton in Hong Kong. With him were Vicente B. Amador and Enrique T. Manuel, partners, and Lilia B. Yang, director for finance and administration.

The award was given by "Asialaw," a monthly magazine covering legal issues affecting business and finance in Asia and published by Asia Law & Practice.

Twelve other law firms in Asia received country awards.

SyCip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan is a full-service law firm. Although its practice centers on business activities, it also offers a broad and integrated range of legal services in family relations, constitutional issues, and other matters of law not related to commerce.

The firm represents numerous high-profile multinational clients and has particular strength in interdisciplinary work. It has contributed to the development of laws on patents, trademarks, copyright, utility models and designs, and unfair competition. Its lawyers' involvement in the enactment of legislation and administrative regulation puts it in the best position to advise and assist clients effectively.

The firm was founded in February 1945 by Alexander SyCip and Norberto Quisumbing. Luciano E. Salazar became a partner in 1949. At present, the managing partner is Andres G. Gatmaitan.

Its head office is in Makati City, with branches in Cebu, Davao and Subic. Website is www.syciplaw.com.

Riding through roller coaster years

TRIVIA: In 1989, when it conceived a name for a new carnival concept it will operate, the Philippine Exhibits and Themeparks Corp. (Petco) came up with something that reflects the hopes for a Philippine economy at that time—Boom na Boom.

Indeed, there could not have been a more appropriate time to introduce a high-end carnival that departs from the traditional *perya* that Filipinos have grown accustomed to. Boom na Boom Carnival was an instant success as it brought into the local scene big rides, unique attractions and a festive (instead of loud) carnival mood that Filipinos immediately embraced.

A few years after, carnivals of the same concept started sprouting, each claiming to have its own style but undeniably patterned their standards to that established by Boom na Boom in the theme park industry.

Amid the ongoing competition among theme parks now, Petco vice president Haydee Kwan remains confident Boom na Boom is here to stay. For one, Boom na Boom has become synonymous to Christmas because it is the only carnival in the country that opens its gates exclusively for the Holidays.

"People get excited when they see the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Gil Puyat Avenue get lighted up because it is a sign that Christmas is just around the corner. And we always make it a point that we come up with grand entrances to the carnival every year because Christmas is a big Filipino tradition," Kwan says.

Petco also makes sure they have something new to offer each year. Boom na Boom started the grand magic shows, free concerts to carnival visitors, fireworks displays, and those creepy horror houses amidst a Christmas atmosphere. Of course, who would forget the Royal London Circus that not only kids loved but dads most specially?

Since those "boom" years when it started, Boom na Boom went through its own roller coaster of experiences—economic boom, bust and even coup d'etats—and witnessed how Filipinos struggled to keep the spirit of Christmas alive even during the lowest of the low times.

"It is very inspiring and heartwarming when you see people from all sides of the social spectrum converge at Boom na Boom during the Holidays. We feel good that somehow we serve as equalizers because what the family of a business executive gets are the same treats that the family of a carpenter gets at Boom na Boom," Kwan narrates.

This year, Boom na Boom features a Chinese culture inspired Christmas as it brought in the Lantern Festival from Zigong, China, complemented with daily performances by the China Youth Acrobatic Troupe from the province of Wuqiao.

CONSUMER RESEARCH

Research firm to expand survey base

TNS, one of the world's leading market information groups, is expanding its consumer sample base to be able to offer deeper insights into consumer behavior from its Consumer Panel research.

TNS announced it is strengthening Consumer Panel coverage of National Philippines commencing 2005. The current Philippine urban sample of 2,000 households will be complemented by a further 1,000 household samples from the rural areas. This move recognizes the growing development of the Philippine rural areas as well as the increasing demand from TNS' client base for representation in this area.

Vicky Abad, TNS commercial director, Consumer Panels, says "With government initiatives in place to support rural growth and development, now is an ideal time to increase our sample for our clients. As opportunities for employment increase in these rural areas it becomes increasingly important to track and understand shopping behavior by consumers as their disposable income increases."

Rural Philippines now accounts for about half of the total household population and is estimated to contribute about 35 percent of the total Philippine income and expenditure. This increase in sample coverage also recognizes the diversity of the profile of this segment in contrast with observed consumer purchase behavior in the urban areas.

The urban shopper is expectedly more likely to purchase luxury goods given higher disposable incomes, their wide exposure to new and upcoming products as well as greater motivation to buy on basis of value and convenience.

Rural consumers are generally less exposed to media, and the cultures remain diverse. The rural upland customers are highly matriarchal families with a deeply ingrained culture of female decision-making. The rural lowland is more advanced in agriculture, and tends to show material affluence while the rural coastline are able to benefit from the natural food resources of the islands ecosystem.

This distinctness in regional culture will obviously affect consumer preferences and purchase behavior. Hence, a better representation of the rural sample becomes a key for food as well as other FMCG product categories.

"The expansion of the panel will enable our clients to better understand category performance on an urban versus rural basis," says Marie Lee, general manager, TNS Philippines. "We recognize the importance of a National Philippines Panel as consumer behavior changes—providing our clients with an even greater depth of understanding of their consumers' distinctness in profile and preferences."

The launch of the National Philippines is part of a series of new developments currently being introduced by TNS across Asia including a national panel in China, an Internet Ladypanel in Korea, a rural panel in Thailand and Lifestyle studies in all major Asian countries.

TNS is one of the world's leading market information groups. The company provides market measurement, analysis and consumer insight through it's global network of operating companies in 70 countries worldwide. Working with both local and multinational organizations, TNS helps it's clients to develop effective business strategies and enhance relationships with their customers.

Shopping on credit via text

"TEXTING capital of the world"—that's how the Philippines is branded among other things.

And the reality of it is that texting has fast become part and parcel of our culture. While the issue of "text" lingo and spelling (or misspelling at that) remains to be a big buzz among the old school, the fact remains that the convenience it has brought to our lives is undeniable.

Introducing and marketing new technology only has one major concern—how people will embrace the new product or service.

A little bit over 50 years ago, the idea of using a small, flat, rectangular piece of plastic to purchase things with was introduced. Since then, the use of credit cards has become second nature to spending consumers.

If you think that the power of plastic money in purchasing things and services is amazing, don't you think that charging our purchases thru text is simply far out? But not with the innovation of two companies which have taken texting to its new heights, as they join forces to introduce a new and exciting concept. GIST Marketing Trends (GMT) conceptualized the business solution or method, while Optimum Source Inc. (OSI) is a solutions provider company that has the hardware and the state-of-the-art "plug and play" XMS software to implement the concept.

The GMT Charge Concept is a value-added service facility for all credit card holders and cell phone subscribers. The idea is a service facility of linking one's cell phone or SIM number with his or her credit account number. Security safeguards are present using transaction PINs, acknowledgement slips, MOAs and personal credit history and tracking.

One can now shop or dine on credit at establishments using their cellular phones. This means extra security for them because they need not carry their credit cards everywhere they go, but it offers the accessibility to transact credit payments and purchases wherever you are. The scheme is compatible with any network provider and applies to both prepaid and post-paid subscribers. Supplementary cardholders can also enjoy the same benefit of wireless charging without the plastic.

This vision of future credit purchase mode is something to watch for. It promises more convenience and improved security advantages. It promises a whole new lifestyle. Who would have thought that shopping on credit will be so much easy as it is just a text away!

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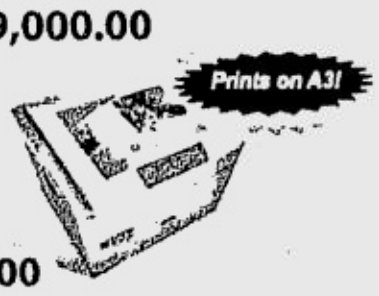

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Make consumers think choco drink while running a race

From page B3-1

tival, now on its 15th year. For this brand, the value Nestle wants to project via the event is spending time with the family.

A third long-running event is the Nestea Volley, now on its 9th year. This is a college volleyball competition.

Over the past few years they have been holding music events for Nescafe to try and attract more young people to drinking coffee.

"Our philosophy is to hold events for the long-term. Before we go into an event we think properly if it is going to allow consumers to experience the brand. Activities we would like to sustain," he says.

But Eugenio acknowledges that conveying brand values cannot be done overnight which is why they go for long-term activities. Quantifying and qualifying the impact of events is also not done with one event and non-traditional measures are used.

"We use the softer measures like the year on year interests generated—whether this goes up. We also have consumer surveys about how they learned of the event."

Eugenio tries to go to all the events to see first hand the impact of the events.

No new events are expected this coming year. But Eugenio says they are coming up with products and packaging to respond to the economic times in the country. They recently came up with a smaller pack of the Nido full cream milk powder which will be sold in *sari-sari* stores—still the main source of grocery items of the majority of the Filipinos.

"They shop in *sari sari* stores daily. Its the extension of their pantry," points out Eugenio.

He admits competition remains tough and the key is to really get to know your consumers.

Eugenio admits in some categories "I do not want to be a mom" because of the variety of choices one has.

He points out that 70 percent of shoppers' decisions are made on the spot. "They will buy more if they see something appealing. That's why when I go to market visits I observe. I like to understand how they use products."

NESTEA Beach Volley is on its 9th year.

THE BEAR Brand Kite Flying turns 15 years next year.

US Treasury to print other countries' money

WASHINGTON—The US government's giant printing presses could soon be cranking out something in addition to the old American greenback.

The Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing has gotten the go-ahead from Congress to print other countries' currencies.

A provision giving the bureau this authority is contained in a bill overhauling the country's intelligence operations. The bill is awaiting President George W. Bush's signature to become law.

Although the government wouldn't profit from such ventures, bureau director Thomas Ferguson said the experience could help it sharpen its anti-counterfeiting skills.

"It would give us an opportunity to do some interesting things that we might be able to learn from and possibly use to help us do US currency better," Ferguson said in an interview.

Currently, though, the bureau hasn't lined up the business of any countries, Ferguson said. It plans a very low-key marketing approach.

"We'll certainly let countries know, but we're not a marketing firm. We're not a private company. We'll be available if they need us," Ferguson said.

He sees a potential target in small, developing countries that lack the technical wherewithal to produce their own currencies.

Under the bill, the bureau would have the authority to produce not only paper money but also postage stamps and other so-called "security" documents such as drivers licenses and passports for foreign governments.

The bureau, however, would need to make sure such potential projects are OK with the Treasury Department in terms of not interfering with US production of dollars, and the State Department, which would determine if a given project was consistent with US foreign policy.

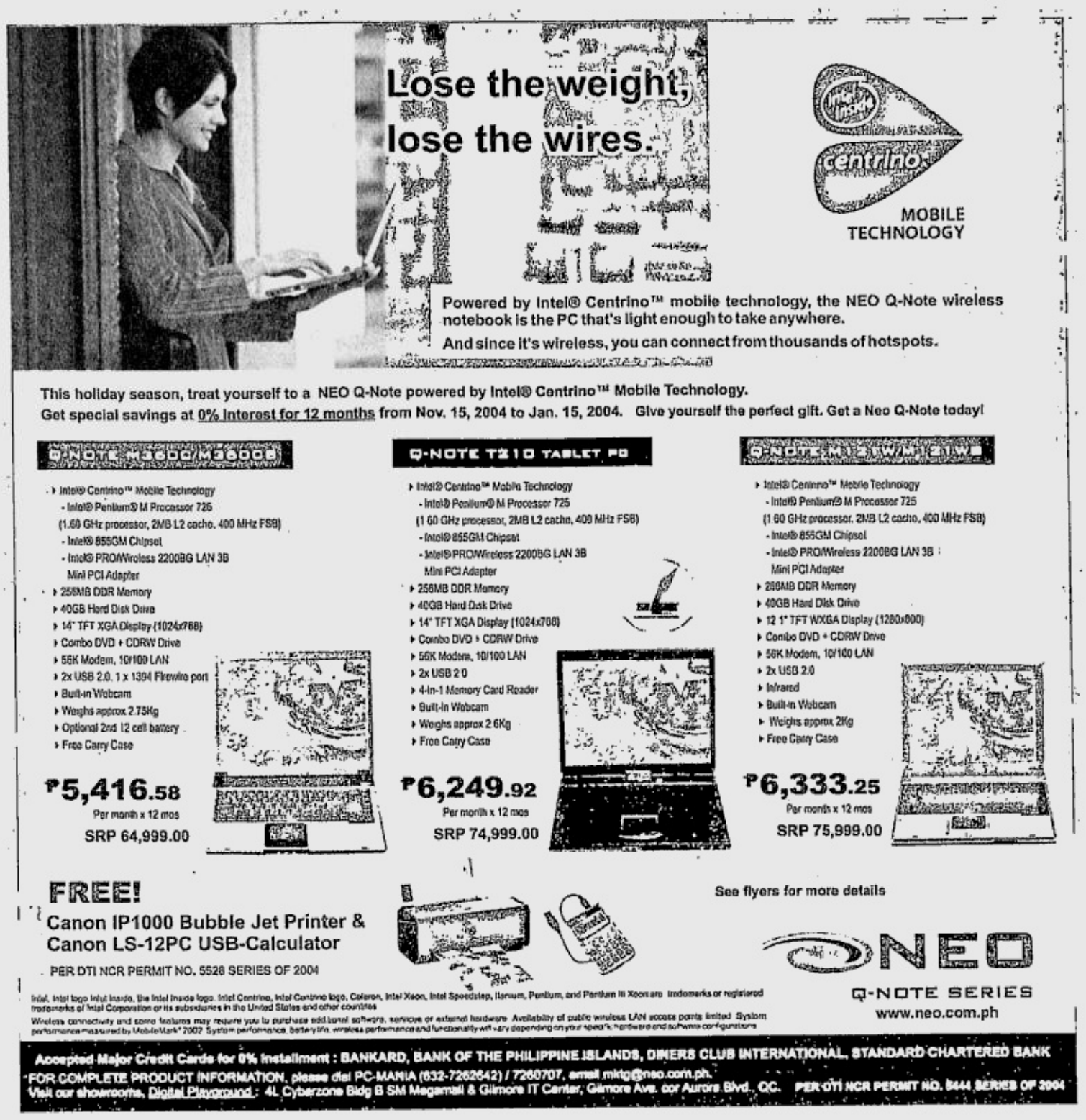
Over the years, the bureau has had to turn down requests by countries, including Turkey, South Africa and Kuwait, for various printing projects because it lacked the necessary authority, government officials said.

After Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was ousted and Iraq's economy was being rebuilt, a British company, De La Rue, snagged the contract to print the new Iraqi dinar.

"In 2003, US taxpayers paid a foreign printing company approximately $80 million to produce the new Iraqi currency," Brian Roseboro, the Treasury Department's undersecretary for domestic finance, told a House committee in September.

Even if the bureau had the authority at the time, the contract was so large that the bureau might only have been able to produce a portion of what was needed, Ferguson said. The bureau, he said, has been trying to get authority from Congress to print other countries' currencies for at least four years.

There have been a few times in the bureau's history that under special circumstances it has printed currencies for other governments, Ferguson said. Those instances include the Philippines in 1928, and Cuba in 1934. *AP*



Key areas to spell success of co-branded cards

THE GROWTH and success in co-branded card programs in Asia/Pacific will depend on the ability to meet the needs in three key areas: technology, mass customization and customer loyalty, according to MasterCard International.

At the MasterCard 2004 Asia/Pacific Co-Branding Partners' Forum recently held in Shanghai, China with the theme "Strategies for Growth," senior MasterCard executives and co-brand partners shared insights into industry trends, business drivers, consumer demand and best practice to provide financial institutions with a strategic framework to grow their card programs in the region.

Asia is emerging as a vibrant co-brand card market, according to Ajay Bhalla, senior vice president and general manager, South-East Asia, and head, Center of Excellence for Co-Branding, Asia/Pacific, MasterCard. Speaking at the opening session of the Forum, he made reference to MasterCard's 21,000 co-brand programs globally, of which 9,000 are in the Asia/Pacific region.

"Co-branding is a win-win proposition for both organizations and consumers. Alliances with top brands are an excellent strategy to build brand equity. Co-brand programs of MasterCard have been highly successful and have aided our partners in achieving greater operational efficiencies and higher revenues. Our consumers have also stood to gain, with co-branding creating compelling customer value and increasing customer satisfaction," said Bhalla.

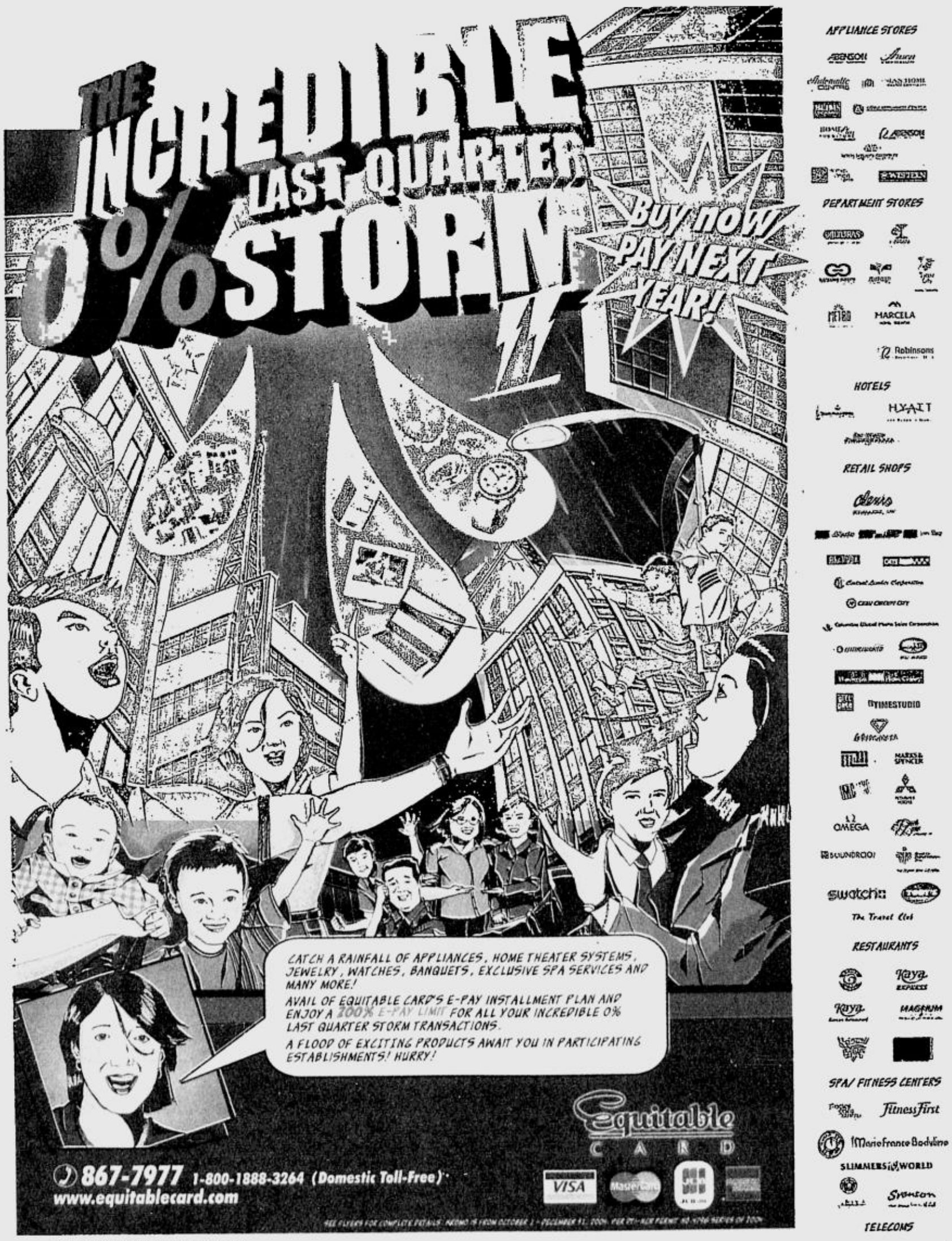
Asian consumers are among the world's most technology savvy and this will be reflected in their choice of payments products. For the last three consecutive years, MasterCard has experienced a 100 percent year-on-year growth in the number of smart cards in the region. As of June 2004, there were 23 million MasterCard smart cards in Asia/Pacific. The interoperability and expanded functionalities of smart cards make them ideal for issuers who want to enhance their co-brand programs. In the near future, technologies such as mobile payments and contactless payment will provide issuers with added value propositions for co-branding.

Co-branded programs have a high propensity for customer retention and are a well tested platform for developing a loyal customer base. With increasing competition and the proliferation of options, converting the new customer to a loyal one will continue to be key to the success of a co-brand program.

Customization and segmentation will also continue to play increasingly important roles. Those with tailored offerings built on a strong understanding of consumers' evolving lifestyles will make significant impact.

MasterCard's diversified co-brand card programs offer the opportunity to reward customers with an expanded-utility payment vehicle. They deliver payment mechanisms of unsurpassed global acceptance, reliability and convenience, backed with comprehensive operational, marketing and security features.

Allowing exceptional flexibility for meeting the varied needs of the cardholder base, MasterCard's co-brand programs have brought about a unique way of accessing customers, resulting in enhanced customer information, better customer communications and cross-sell opportunities.



NDD na titigil ang kwentuhan

NDD na magmamadali magsalita

NDD na mahuhuli sa balita

NDD na magdadagdag ng P200

NDD ka na kailangan mag-apply

NDD ka na mag susubscribe sa iba

NDD ka na magbabayad

Globelines

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VILLALON tackles Cebu waterfront /C6

LIFESTYLE

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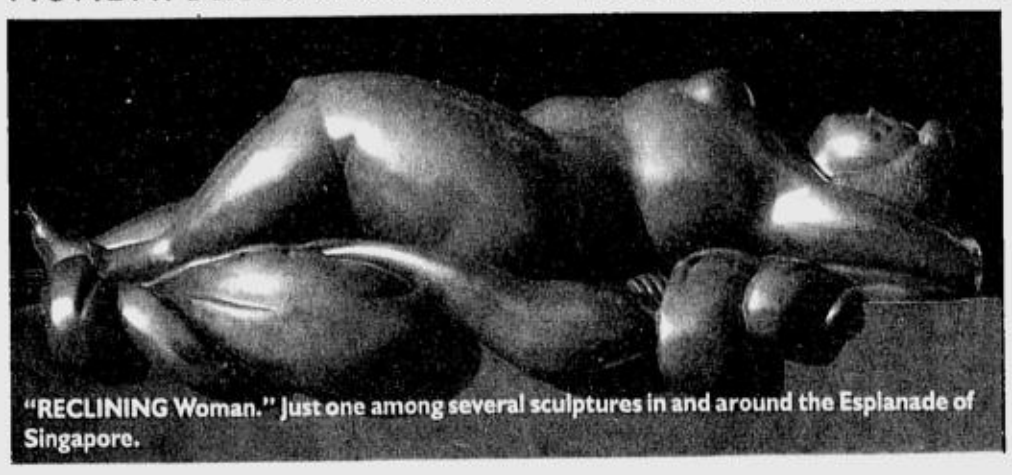
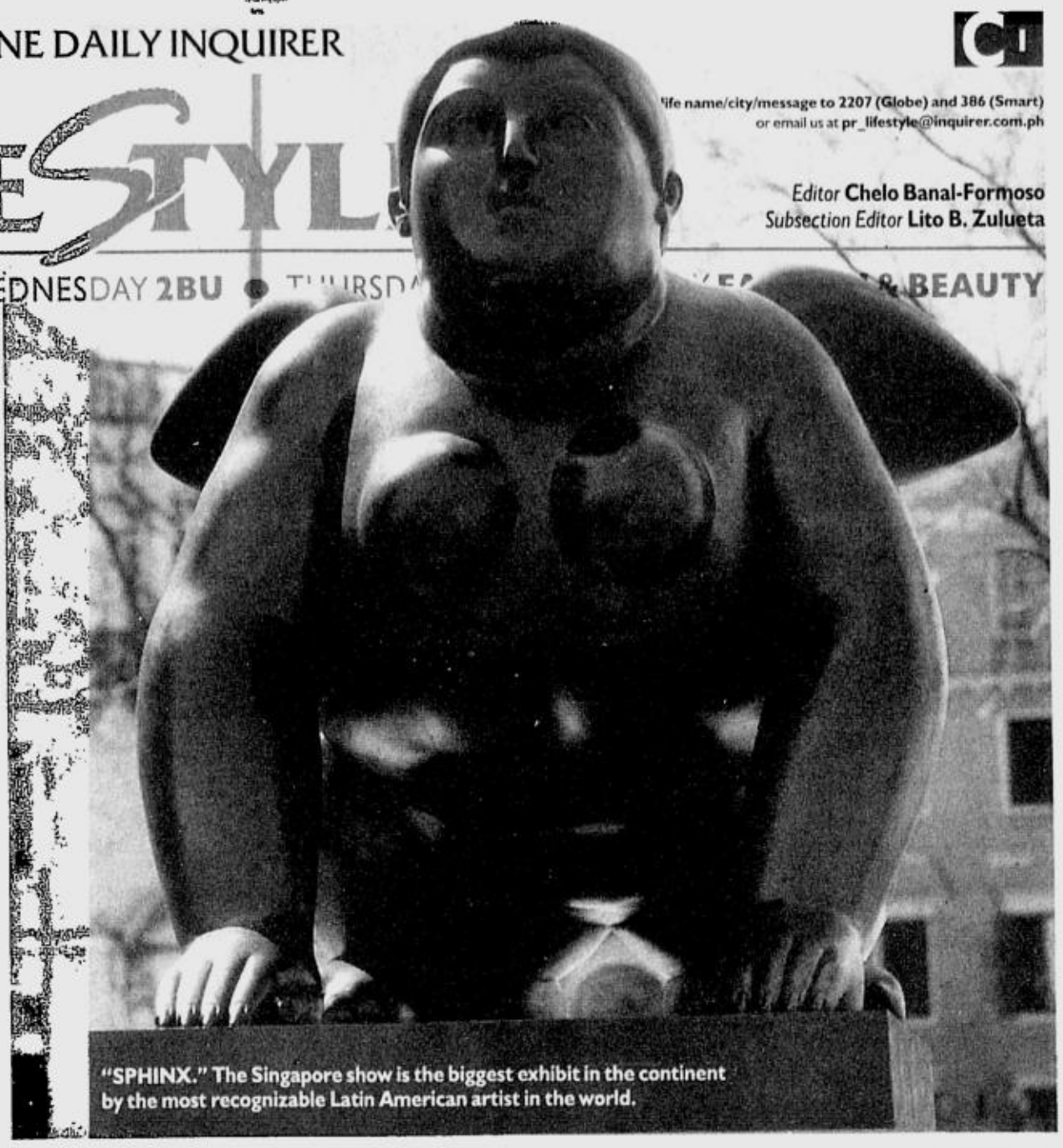
MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY ... & BEAUTY



"RECLINING Woman." Just one among several sculptures in and around the Esplanade of Singapore.



"SPHINX." The Singapore show is the biggest exhibit in the continent by the most recognizable Latin American artist in the world.

Botero takes Botox-crazy Asia by storm

By Lito B. Zulueta

FIGURE-CONSCIOUS Asia gets a Botox injection of overweight wonders with the massive show of Fernando Botero's paintings and sculptures in Singapore, said to be the largest show ever in the region of the Colombian artist known for his strange and whimsical works of plump figures that ordinary people often confuse for fat rather than art, for rotundity rather than profundity.

The show, "Botero in Singapore," consists of 60 paintings, most of them large oils-in-canvas and the rest in watercolors-on-paper, at the Singapore Art Museum (71 Bras Basah Rd.; tel: +65 6332-3222), and of 20 sculptures mainly around the Esplanade, Singapore's multimillion cultural showcase along the riverside.

Although Paris, Chicago, Venice and Madrid had played host to Botero's large-scale works before, the Singapore show is the first time Asia will get to see how the monumental works fare side by side with the Asian environment.

Valentine Willie, the show's curator and the man responsible for bringing a Latin American artist to Asia, an anachronism of sorts to some, does not hide the fact that Singapore aims to become a cultural center of the region. "While the funding environment here in Singapore is certainly challenging, there is no denying the overall ambition and desire to be world-class."

A serious student of western art since he was a young man, Botero does not hide the fact that he breathes and lives the classical tradition, particularly the Italian Renaissance achievement in defining space and volume. He laments that "the art of today has no connection with the past."

Botero said he is a contemporary artist who is connected to the past. "I provide contemporary expression based on tradition," he told the Inquirer. "My attitude is of taking sources (from the past) but expressing myself in a new way."

He said style defines the artist. But style is evolution and study. It is the product of education and assimilation. One should know tradition in order to break with it, he explained. One should know the rules in order to break them and come to one's own voice, one's own style.

Recognizable

Botero's style is instantly recognizable: exaggerated and inflated shapes with wild and unpredictable shifts in scale. The paintings are polished and refined, without traces of brushwork or texture. The bronze sculptures are monumental but polished. It is a style that has been called surprising, whimsical, and charming.

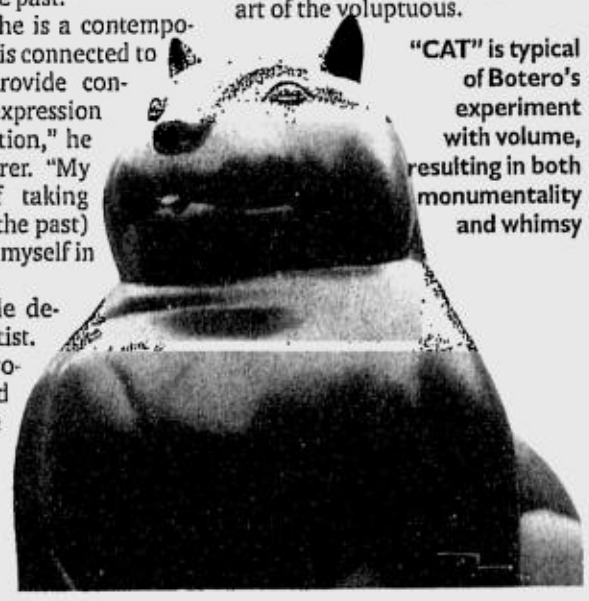
His nudes and other figures have been called fat, obese, overweight, portly and corpulent. But Botero rejects these descriptions. "That my figures are fat is the farthest from the truth," he said. He explained his works are explorations of form and volume. His stress on volume puts in the forefront the quality of beauty as sensuous, ample, and curvaceous.

Thus, Botero recasts the classical proportions and ideas of beauty in a contemporary vein. If the best line in classical art is neither the straight nor the diagonal line, but the curve, then he restores the primacy of the bend and curvature as the arc of art.

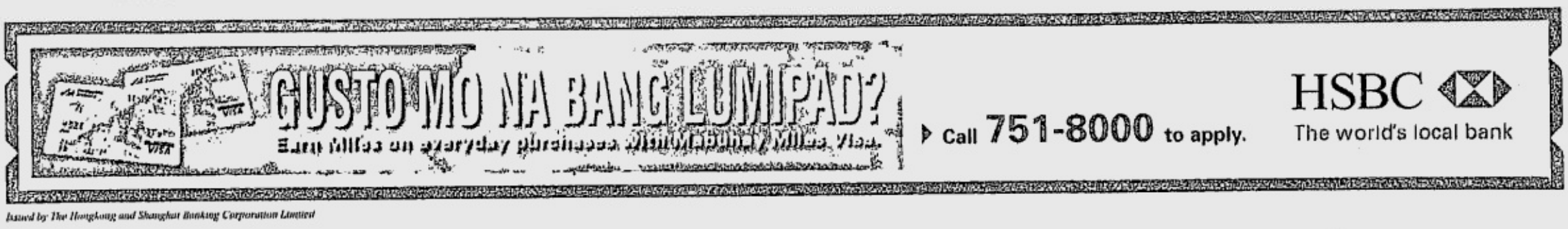
Botero would like to look at himself as continuing the achievement of Giotto. "Volume and space were discovered by Giotto," he said. He explained that Giotto gave emphasis to reality and presence through volume.

In another interview, he said that it was Giotto who created poetic space in art. The combination of space and volume gave rise to expression. He said this was also the achievement of Vermeer, who had "a tremendous sense of decoration," endowing art with a "spiritual-cultural atmosphere."

He said he would like to continue this tradition of expressiveness through his expansive art of the voluptuous.



"CAT" is typical of Botero's experiment with volume, resulting in both monumentality and whimsy



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2004

FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are very thoughtful and attentive. You approach what you do carefully and thoroughly. You often master a particular craft. You have a penchant for psychology because you appreciate the underlying motives people have. Because of this, you often see irony in the human condition. Work hard this year for rewards in 2006.
Birthdate of: Christopher Plummer, actor; Dick Van Dyke, actor; Wendie Malick, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You won't waste the resources of others . You are grateful for the help that they are prepared to offer you . Not only that, you respect them and your good fortune!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Discussions with partners and close friends are serious today; however, they are meaningful and practical. This is a good time to define boundaries and establish guidelines.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You can get an enormous amount done today. You're willing to put work before pleasure right now. This is an excellent way to start your week off.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Romance with someone older or more established than you is likely now. (You could fall in love with your boss!) You also feel serious about your responsibilities regarding children

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good time to make long-term investments about home and real estate. Family discussions are practical and serious. An elder has good advice now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're only interested in long-range plans today. You don't feel at all frivolous about anything. You want to know how things work out in the future.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is an excellent day for business and commerce. Talk to bosses and people in authority about how to improve your job or future profits. People will listen to you today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're prepared to put frivolous concerns second and duty first today. You have a strong sense of obligation and responsibility. You're taking things seriously but not in a heavy way.

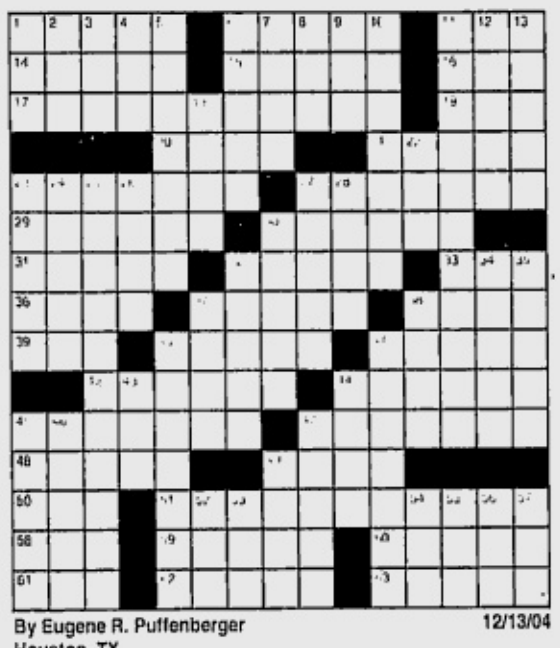
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You feel wise today (sort of like Gandalf). You see how important it is to save for a rainy day. You feel very future-oriented about practical matters.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Listen to the advice of someone older or wiser or more experienced than you are. You can learn a lot today. Don't just shoot from the hip.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): People respect your opinions today. They know that you are modern and 50 years ahead of your time, and that's why you're the one with all the ideas!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Plans for travel, education and publishing now look doable. Go ahead with whatever you hope to accomplish. You will succeed in these areas. Anything is possible!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX
12/13/04

ACROSS
1 Clan pattern
6 Fax precursor
11 Skip and jump preceder
14 Natural hair-coloring
15 __ and well
16 "__ Gang"
17 Henry James heroine
19 Baton Rouge sch.
20 NASCAR's Yarborough
21 Lubricated
23 Lear and Mailer
27 Change one's do
29 Romantic involvements
30 Enrapture
31 Discernment
32 Husbands' partners
33 Decorative vase
36 You, to a Quaker
37 Accepted as fact
38 Leg joint
39 Long-haired ox
40 Burdened
41 "Karma __"
42 Grommet
44 Invented
45 Nickname
47 Comes back
48 Daybreak
49 Morrison or Tennille
50 Equal score
51 "The Sea, the Sea" author
58 Ancient
59 Brief summary
60 Habituate
61 Actor Alejandro
62 Mimickers
63 Spiteful

DOWN
1 Advanced deg.
2 Comic Delaria
3 Black cuckoo
4 Election winners
5 Preschool school
6 Hind parts
7 French fashion magazine
8 Abner's size?
9 First lady?
10 Abnormal dryness
11 "The Piano" star
12 Water bird: var.
13 Bluenose
18 Provides with a crew
22 "__ My Party"
23 Cooper's Bumppo
24 Nebraska city
25 Political family matriarch
26 Unable to speak
27 Bird that can parrot
28 Tied
30 Metal bolt
32 Increase in girth
34 Show again
35 Some tides
37 Actress Storm
38 African antelope
40 Monetary unit of Honduras
41 Mock-heroic
43 "She Loves __"
44 Bill of fare
46 Actress Mary
48 Duplicity
47 Easy victories
49 Russian ruler
52 Elected off.
53 Hard water?
54 O.J. trial letters
55 Not at home
56 PC monitor element
57 " Jude"

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	T	T	I	C	S		I	N	S	O	M	N	I	A
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H	L	M	I	T			O	I	L	S	H	A	L	E
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U	S	A		G	R	A	N	T		N	H	E	L	P
M	I	G	R	A	I	N	E		S	A	U	N	A	S
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D	E	R	A	N	G	E	S		B	E	L	L	E	S

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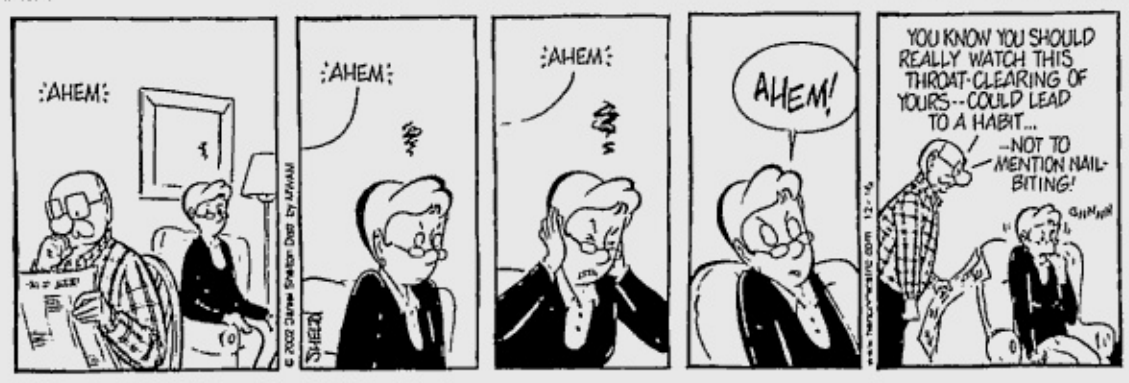
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

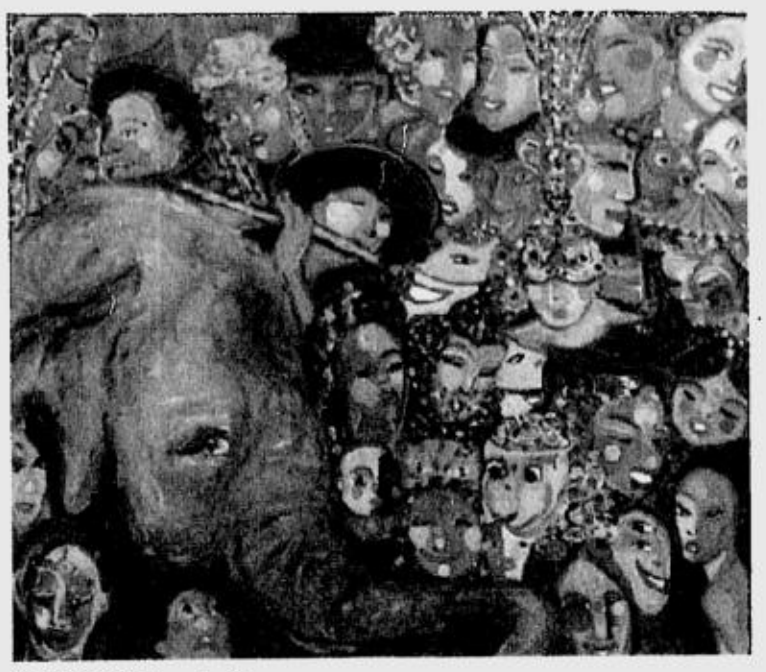
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON



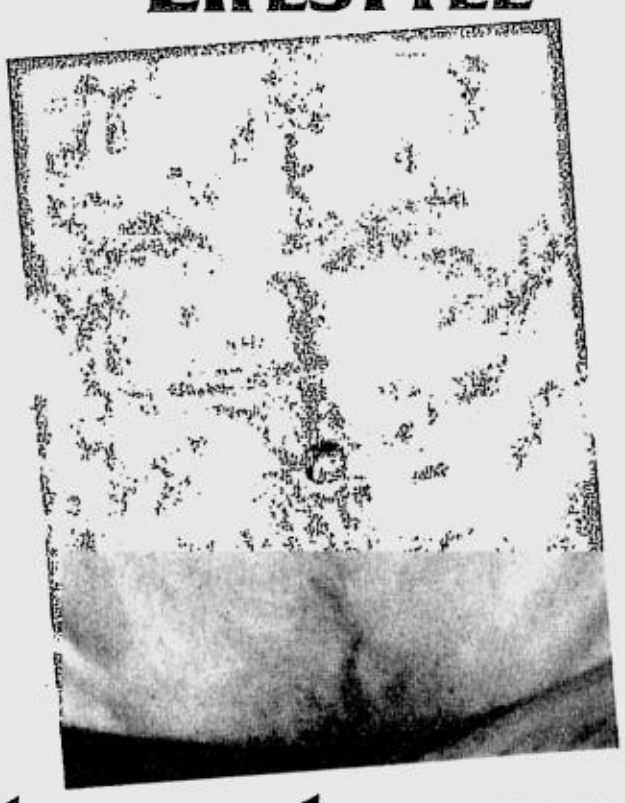
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



"GARNESH Parade," by Popo San Pascual



"RICARDO" by Pardo de Leon (above) and "Blind Man's Bluff" by Mario Fernandez (right)

A heady trip through colors and forms

By Constantino C. Tejero

SOME of the most opulent forms and colors may be experienced in a show of seven contemporaries with individual styles, of various mediums, and in different disciplines.

This group of local and New York-based Filipino artists in their 30s, working in ceramics, painting, photography, wood, varnishes and various objects, has gathered their heady stuff in the exhibit "Trip 7," until Dec. 20 in The Drawing Room, Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City.

Erika Arroyo works in terra cotta, both glazed and unglazed. Her domino masks, plates, cups and kettle are notable for their irregular shapes and melting hues of slate-blue, umber, white, brown and celadon.

Mario Fernandez has eight paintings of his signature tropical scenes and figures of olden times. Five are rendered in ink, watercolor, acrylic and tempera wash on paper, of violet, orange, green, yellow, blue, red, brown, invariably depicting baldheaded nude male figures in various attitudes of walking, holding a basket, a mirror, a carnation.

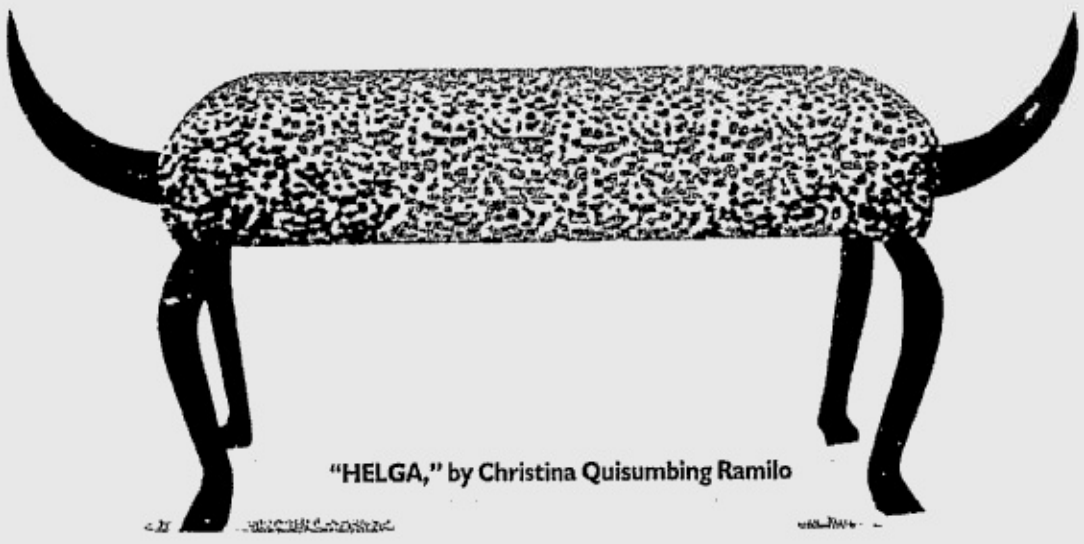
Three are in oil on canvas. One is a small triptych in brown, gold, ochre, pink, yellow, green, black, of three nudes holding guitars and lute.

Mysterious visuals

Two are big-scale tableaux rendered in the dark tones, bold outlines and mysterious visual narrative of Gauguin, and the intense colors and naïf forms of Henri Rousseau. "Figure with Veil," predominantly dark brown, has a male nude on the floor under a lacy veil, a red shoe on the floorboard, a red domino and a red crest on the brownish-gray wall.

"Blind Man's Bluff" depicts against repeat curves of white and blue a game among two half-nude lads, one with yellow blindfold, and three maidens dressed in red, violet and pink, one brandishing a brown fan, with an open book, upturned chair, cushioned stool, dog and rooster on the striped mat.

Ava Lugtu's series of six untitled photographs in black and white show circular forms of warped and swirling lines, the multilayers of lines creating visual texture. These are actually extreme closeup shots of a washing-machine dryer, so blown up into a closely cropped circle till it's almost unrecognizable and the photographic image looks like oil painting.



"HELGA," by Christina Quisumbing Ramilo

Popo San Pascual, working in oil on canvas, has nine paintings of faces mounted edge to edge to form one long continuous mural of faces indistinguishable from comedy masks or multicolor balloons. His "Baptism" and "Garnesh Parade" are large-scale works depicting festivities, composed of his signature brightly colored dots and circles, masks and faces, and a blue-violet elephant.

Christina Quisumbing Ramilo's functional art plays with wood,

A HEADY/ C7

BIRTH SPACING WHILE BREASTFEEDING

IS IT ENOUGH?

Breastfeeding has never been given importance as now. With the mother's health and today's economic situation, this importance is all the more seen. Breastfeeding, aside from the health benefits a baby could get from it, has been seen as one method for birth spacing. But is it really effective? Lactoammenorhea, the absence of a woman's monthly period during breastfeeding, can be used as an aid to contraception.

Certain criteria need to be met for Lactationa Ammenorhea Method (LAM) to be effective as a contraception: A mother should practice full breastfeeding. This would mean the mother should not give water or any other milk or food to the newborn; During daytime, breastfeeding should be conducted every four hours and night time, every six hours, although, this will obviously take a heavy toll to mothers, most especially the working ones; The mother should not have yet her regular monthly period. Beyond six months, LAM may no longer be as reliable.

Organon Philippines, Inc. recently launched the first and only estrogen-free ovulation inhibitor oral contraceptive pill. **This pill with its simple and continuous 28-tablet regimen is proven to have no adverse effect on lactation and growth of newborns.** This estrogen-free pill contains only one female hormone, the progestogen DESOGESTREL, 75mcg per tablet. Its mechanism of action resembles that of a combined pills and is distinctly different from that of a traditional progestogen-only pills or mini pills. With this estrogen-free pill, there is an excellent reliability in the prevention of pregnancy with 12-hours margin of safety.

Furthermore, Dr. Ulrich Karck presented results of a study in Germany showing that estrogen related side-effects like breast tension, nausea, edema and headache improved or resolved within three months of using the estrogen-free pill contatining 75mcg of Desogestrel. (FIGO. 2003). The new estrogen-free pill is now available in leading drugstores nationwide.

For questions, please consult your doctor or email: gracial@organon.ph Or text to 0917-8523350
Or send your letters to:
ORGANON PHILS., INC.
5th Flr., Feliza Bldg., #108 VA Rufino St., Legaspi Village, Makati City 1260 Tel.# 02-8177638 loc. 14 & 20 Fax # 02-8177471

Promo Mechanics:

1. Promo period : October 22, 2004 - March 4, 2005
2. Promo coverage: GMA
3. To join:
   A. Purchase any of the following POTEN-CEE product combinations or at least P150.00 worth of POTEN-CEE products for a chance to join the promo.

Possible POTEN-CEE product combinations
a) 1 POTEN-CEE Syrup 250ml
b) 2 POTEN-CEE Syrup 60ml
c) 4 blister packs (1 blister pack = 10 tablets) of POTEN-CEE tablets (sugar-free or candy-coated)
d) 2 blister packs of POTEN-CEE tablets (sugar-free or candy-coated) + 1 POTEN-CEE Drops 30ml
e) 1 POTEN-CEE Syrup 120ml + 1 blister pack of POTEN-CEE tablets (sugar-free or candy-coated)
f) 1 POTEN-CEE Drops 30ml + 1 POTEN-CEE Syrup 60ml

   B. Write your complete name, address, tel. no. and signature on a piece of paper and put it in a letter envelope along with the empty boxes or blister packs included in the combination or the empty boxes or blister packs of POTEN-CEE products worth at least P150.00.
   C. Write the promo title on the envelope: "POTEN-CEE ProtekTODO Tuloy-tuloy Todo-todo Promo" Incomplete entries will be disqualified.
4. Drop in dropboxes located at the entrance/exit area in any of the 13 MRT stations:
   1. Taft Ave. 8. Ortigas
   2. Magallanes 9. Santolan
   3. Ayala 10. Cubao
   4. Buendia 11. Kamuning
   5. Guadalupe 12. Quezon Ave.
   6. Boni 13. North Ave.
   7. Shaw Blvd.

   Or mail to Pascual Laboratories Inc. 817 EDSA, South Triangle Box 1267 CPO Q.C.
5. There will be two (2) MINOR DRAWS:
   * 1st Minor draw - December 17, 2004 at the AYALA MRT Station
   * 2nd Minor draw - January 28, 2005 at the SHAW MRT Station
6. All entries sent by mail to Pascual Laboratories Inc. (PLI) office will be brought to the Ayala and Shaw MRT stations for the respective draw dates.
7. All entries not drawn in both minor draws will still qualify for the grand draw.
8. PRIZES FOR THE TWO MINOR DRAWS
   * 130 winners of MRT card worth P500.00 each
   * 130 winners of pre-paid cellcard worth P500.00 each
   * 78 giftpacks of PLI products worth P1,000.00 each
   * 78 winners of SM gift certificates worth P1,000.00 each
   * 78 winners of Toy Kingdom gift certificates worth P2,000.00 each
9. GRAND DRAW is on March 4, 2005 10 A.M. - 12 P.M. at Pascual Laboratories Inc. office at 817 EDSA, South Triangle Q.C.
10. GRAND DRAW PRIZES

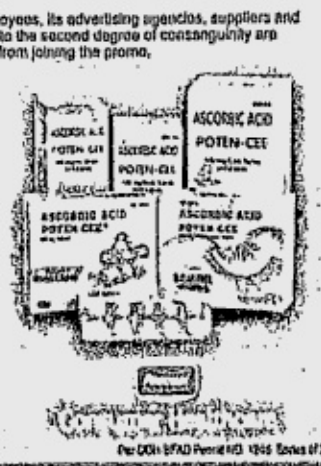
    MAJOR PRIZES/SHOWCASES:
    * 2 winners Kitchen showcase
    * 2 winners Entertainment showcase
    * 2 winners Kiddie showcase
    * 2 winners Techie showcase

    CONSOLATION PRIZES
    * 5 winners of ShoeMart GCs worth P10,000.00 each
    * 5 winners of Mercury Drugstore GCs worth P5,000.00 each
    * 2 winners of IPOD
    * 130 winners of MRT prepaid cards worth P500.00 each
    * 130 winners of prepaid cellcards worth P500.00 each
    * 52 winners of ShoeMart GCs worth P1,000.00 each
    * 52 winners of PLI gift packs worth P1,000.00 each
    * 52 winners of Toy Kingdom GCs worth P2,000.00 each
11. A winner can only win once PER DRAW. If his/her name gets drawn twice for that particular draw, he/she gets the prize with the higher value.
12. Winners will be notified thru registered mail and contacted thru telephone.
13. CLAIMING OF PRIZES

    All winners should go to Rapp Collins office at Suite 207 Horizon Bldg., Emerald Ave. Ortigas Ctr. Pasig City. Tel. Nos. 631-6956/631-6787 and 631-6985 and look for Ma. Nora Icaro.

    Winners must present the fl.
    a. Registered mail from Rapp Collins
    b. 2 valid IDs with photo (SSS, Passport, Driver's license, Company ID, School ID)
    A. For Minor Prizes: Prizes should be picked up at the Rapp Collins office.
    B. For Grand Prize Winners: Winners of the Kitchen and Entertainment showcases should go to Rapp Collins office for verification. Upon verification, winners will be given certificates indicating which Western Marketing branch they can claim their prizes. Delivery fee to be shouldered by the winner. Prizes can only be delivered to the winning address.

    Winners of the Kiddie and Techie showcases can pick up their prizes at Rapp Collins office.
14. 20% tax for prizes with a value of P10,000.00 and above will be shouldered by the winner. Winners should pay the 20% tax in CASH prior to release of prizes.
15. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from receipt of notice will be forfeited in favor of PLI with prior BFAD approval.
16. All decisions are deemed final in concurrence with BFAD.
17. All PLI employees, its advertising agencies, suppliers and relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity are disqualified from joining the promo.



Per DOH BFAD Permit NO. 1266 Series of 2004

"BISHOP." Botero says colorful Church vestments strike him.

"WOMAN with Flowers." Even a watercolor work is a play in volume.

"THE PRESIDENT" and "The First Lady"(diptique) make fun of political power in Colombia.

Botero takes Botox-crazy Asia by storm

In his sculptures, Botero not only achieves the illusion of volume but volume itself. Although he has done small bronze works, he is better known for his monumental sculptures.

But he rejects the notion of monumentality as a matter of mathematical size. "It has nothing to do with size," he said. "It has to do with proportions."

The exaggerated proportions reinforce again Botero's thesis that volume and form constitute beauty and design. And since the sculptures are black and polished, light casts delicately on the their surface, evoking both austerity and sensuality.

Wide range of subjects

Botero's subjects range from the traditional genres to contemporary Colombian experiences. His artistic education basically revolved around three artistic areas -- the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the baroque art of Hispanic Colombia -- and these show in his works.

In some instances, the varied subjects meld, as in his Madonna and the Child series, which is a staple both of western and colonial art in Colombia. "When Colombian children go to church, they see all these Madonnas, so clean and perfect," he said in one interview. "In South America, china-like perfection is very much a part of the ideal of beauty."

As a gesture to the masters, Botero has recreated certain iconic works but recast them in the voluminous style that has come to be known as the Botero vintage. These series are usually titled "After . . ." such as "After Pierro della Francesca," "After Ingres," and "After Velasquez." The paintings invariably show the famous subjects of the famous painters rendered in corpulent forms, with exaggerated biliousness and exaggerated diminutiveness, basically a play of contrasts. As Botero said, "In order to achieve the effect of monumentality and volume that I seek, certain details have to be small, so as not to detract from the mass. Monumentality comes in the shock between proportions."

A bullfighting aficionado, Bolero also loves to paint matadors. (He was delighted when he learned my name was Joselito. "You have the name of the greatest matador of all time," he said. I don't know if he was referring to Joselito el Gallo or Joselito Huerta, both great matadors, and he proceeded to autograph my copy of the catalogue of the exhibit by drawing a bull with my name under its nostrils.)

The fascination for this figure with a death wish owes to the artist's fondness for the matador costume.

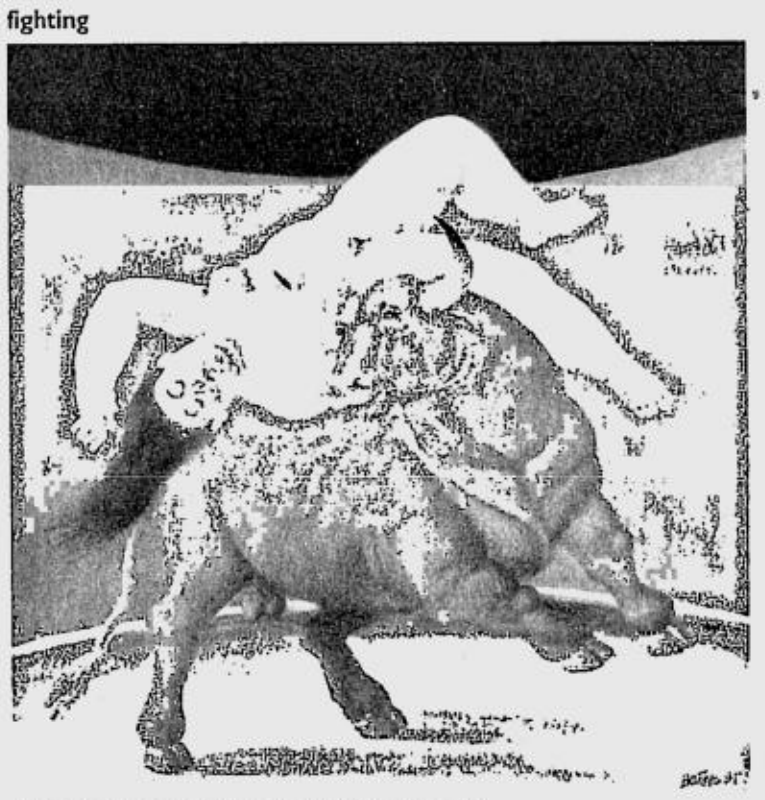
In fact, Botero told the INQUIRER that "there are only two great dressers in the world--the matador and the bishop." He explained the matador puts on pink socks while the bishop wears a red vestment. He added they are "highly original dressers" and should provide the artist "the pretext to explore colors."

Botero also raids western mythology to craft his works. In the Singapore show is a series of sculptures and paintings on the "Rape of Europa," the singular mythological event that explains the tumultuous birth to Europe. In some interviews and annotations, Botero seems to represent the bull as an anti-colonial symbol against the colonialist depredation of the Old World. But the artist usually denies any political interpretation of his work. "Social commentary belongs to the newspaper," he said in Singapore.

But Colombia, with all its colonial baggage and its challenging present—Marxist rebellion and drug trafficking—is always at the heart of his works. "I have tried to see the prictures of my childhood, the villages of Colombia, its people, its generals, its bishops, etc. through the prism of my tenets about art," he said.

BOTERO in Paris with "After Velasquez"

"THE DEATH of Ramon Torres." Botero is fascinated with bullfighting



"RAPE of Europa." A post-colonial critique?

"THE STREET" prefigures Colombia's complex reality.

"MATERNITY." A paean to Colombia's Catholic culture

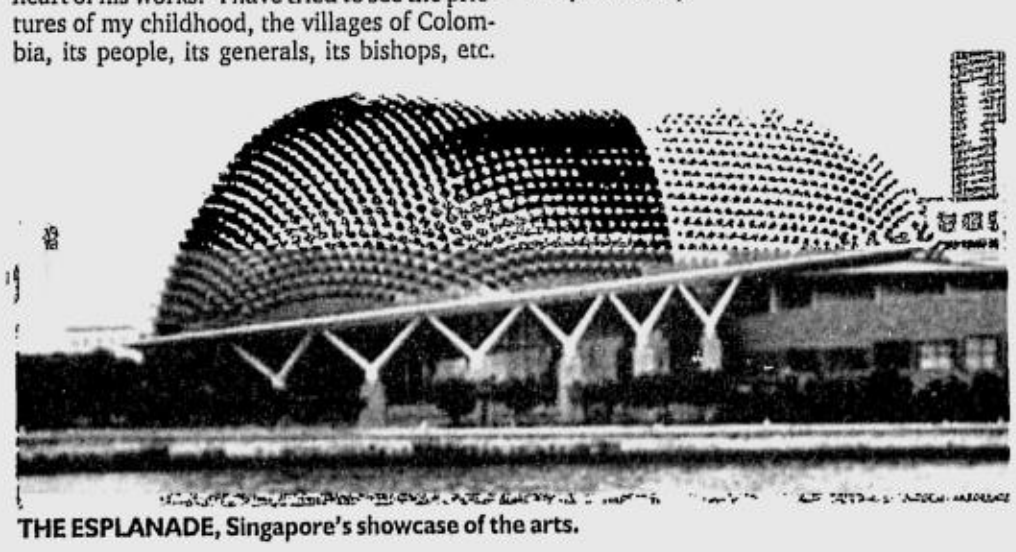
His most celebrated "Colombian" work, "The Bird," was forced on him by the social environment. The original sculpture, which stood on a plaza in Bogota, was bombed in 1995 during a street festival. At first, the drug cartel was blamed (Botero has always denounced the drug traffickers, and he didn't speak to his son for a long time when the latter was sentenced for accepting drug money to finance a political campaign). Later, the Marxist guerrillas owned the bombing, saying Botero was an imperialist tool.

"The most painful thing was that there were so many innocent people killed," Botero said. "If they wanted to destroy the sculpture, they could have done it at five in the morning. But they waited until there was a street festival going on, with people dancing and live music. I don't understand that." He went on to replace the sculpture, but persuaded the authorities to retain the bombed original, so that side by side, the sculptures would symbolize peace and violence.

Today, Botero's art has become closer and closer to the Latin American reality. "We are all mestizos," he told me. "If I we were pure Indian, we would do pre-colonial art. So I have never abandoned my feeling for Latin America. I am honest to my place and my tradition. I went to Spain and Europe to learn tradition, so that my art can become a universal expression. But I do something that speaks to man in a special way."

In the same way, Botero said young Filipino artists should connect with tradition and geography. "Be faithful to your place, to your traditions in the Philippines," he said. "Love your country and look at a lot of art, but after that, do your work in a personal way. The story of art is the same thing. All artists are local--and universal."

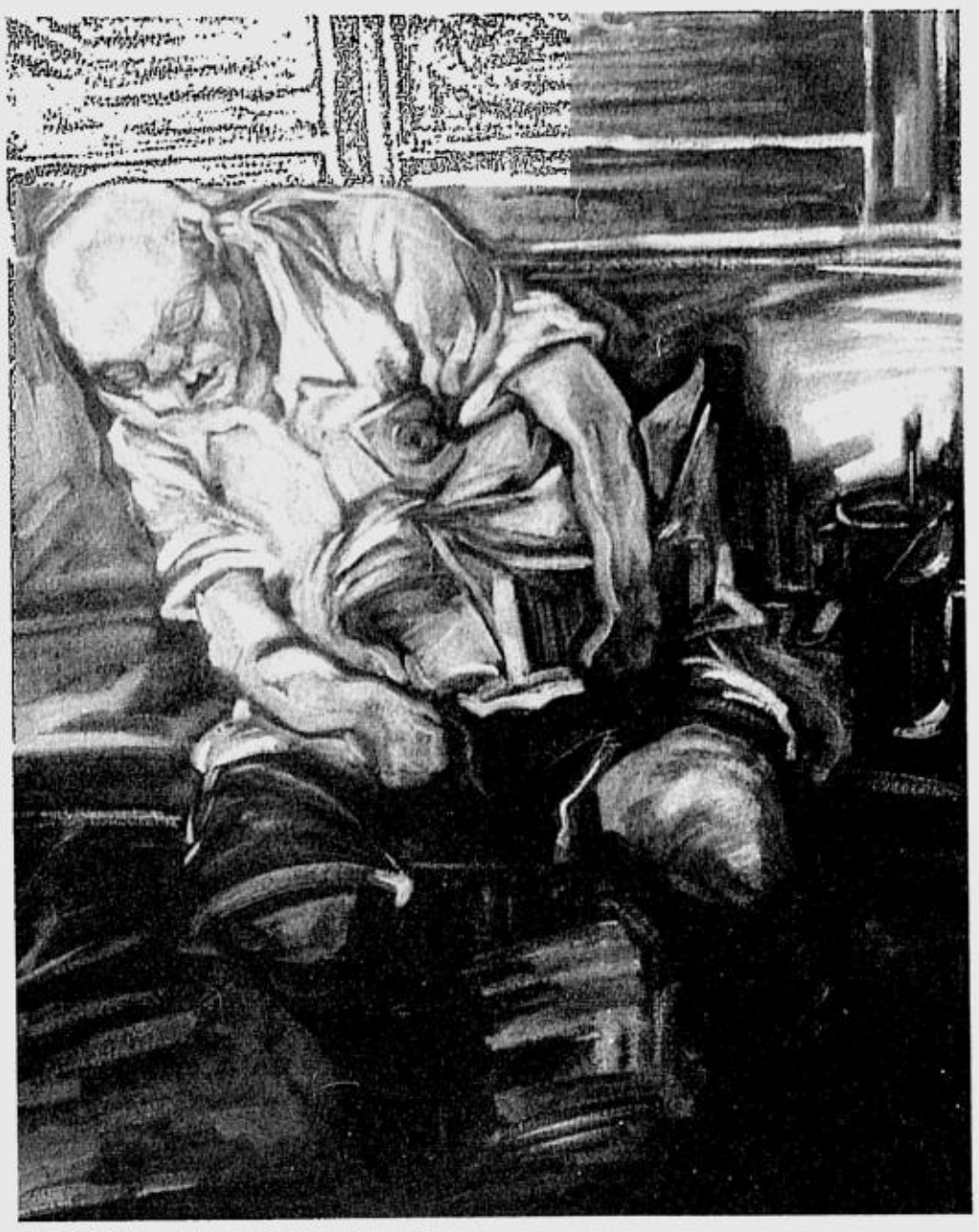
"Botero in Singapore" runs at the Singapore Art Museum, the Esplanade, and elsewhere in Singapore until Feb. 27, 2005. Call the Singapore Tourism Board Manila office (17/F Standard Chartered Bank Bldg, 6788 Ayala Ave.), 8130946 and 8134968.



THE ESPLANADE, Singapore's showcase of the arts.

"OUR Lady of Colombia"

"AFTER Piero della Francesca" (diptique)



"BATANG Antukin Nakahilig sa Kanan"

"KAPIT-BAHAYAN"

"NAGDADALANTAO"

"STARBUCKS"

Culaba's metropolitan horror show

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE URBAN blight has taken a turn for the worse. The megalopolis is enveloped by decrepitude, dehumanization and decay. It is a place now gone to pot.

It is also a place of congestion. Practically every square foot of remaining space has been converted into a makeshift home, *tiangge* or parking lot.

MELVIN Culaba

Long obsessed with the Pinoy's propensity for filling up available space, Melvin Culaba, like his peers Jeho Betancor and Manny Garibay, has explored urban congestion, annotating it with insightful and biting commentaries.

Having grown up in congested Baclaran in Parañaque City, right beside the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, where an uncle-priest belongs to the Redemptorist order, Culaba has painted a gallery of characters he has known and interacted with for many years.

Culaba has won a string of national awards since graduating in 1993 from University of Santo Tomas College of Architecture and Fine Arts (now College of Fine Arts and Design).

He has finally come up with a solo exhibit, "Kamalayan" (Renaissance Gallery, SM Megamall, until Dec. 17).

The show includes a large-scale canvas made years ago, "Pwersa," originally titled "Pagpapasiya: Langit Lupa." It has been renamed to infuse a proper postmodern twist into the subject, or subjects (the figures include animals).

The work shows how Filipinos seem to gravitate around the force of evil: politicos sit side by side with ordinary criminals; even the prince of the Church jams with the deadly beasts of the earth.

Culaba applies his satiric brush in "Ka Pyaskohan" (a pun on "fiasco,) a reference to corruption scandals.

Culaba's expository brushwork prefers to satirize the high and mighty, though *hoi polloi* also get a drubbing.

His craftsmanship lends itself to the earthy subject—textured greens, deep-earth tones and swirling splashes of color.

The artist's roller-coaster ride through the city's grimy streets would not be complete without a telling commentary on how the city folk behave in public places, where "*urbanidad*," as the Metro Manila Development Authority top honcho says, has become extinct.

In "Biyahilo," he shows a group of commuters dozing. In "Blind Musicians sa Bangketa," mendicancy is legitimized if only for the blind to stave off poverty.

Two suites of smaller paintings refer to characters and experiences Culaba has encountered and lived.

There is, for instance, the hunchback as town oddity in "Kubang Tagalinis sa Bangkal Overpass"; the stray dog Culaba fondly named "Starbucks," which he adopted only to lose in an accident, and donated to dog butchers; and pornography in "Cable Links."

Culaba's satire on our follies and foibles is made more acutely horrifying with the way he delineates his subjects—unspeakably ugly, truly monstrous, in face and body.

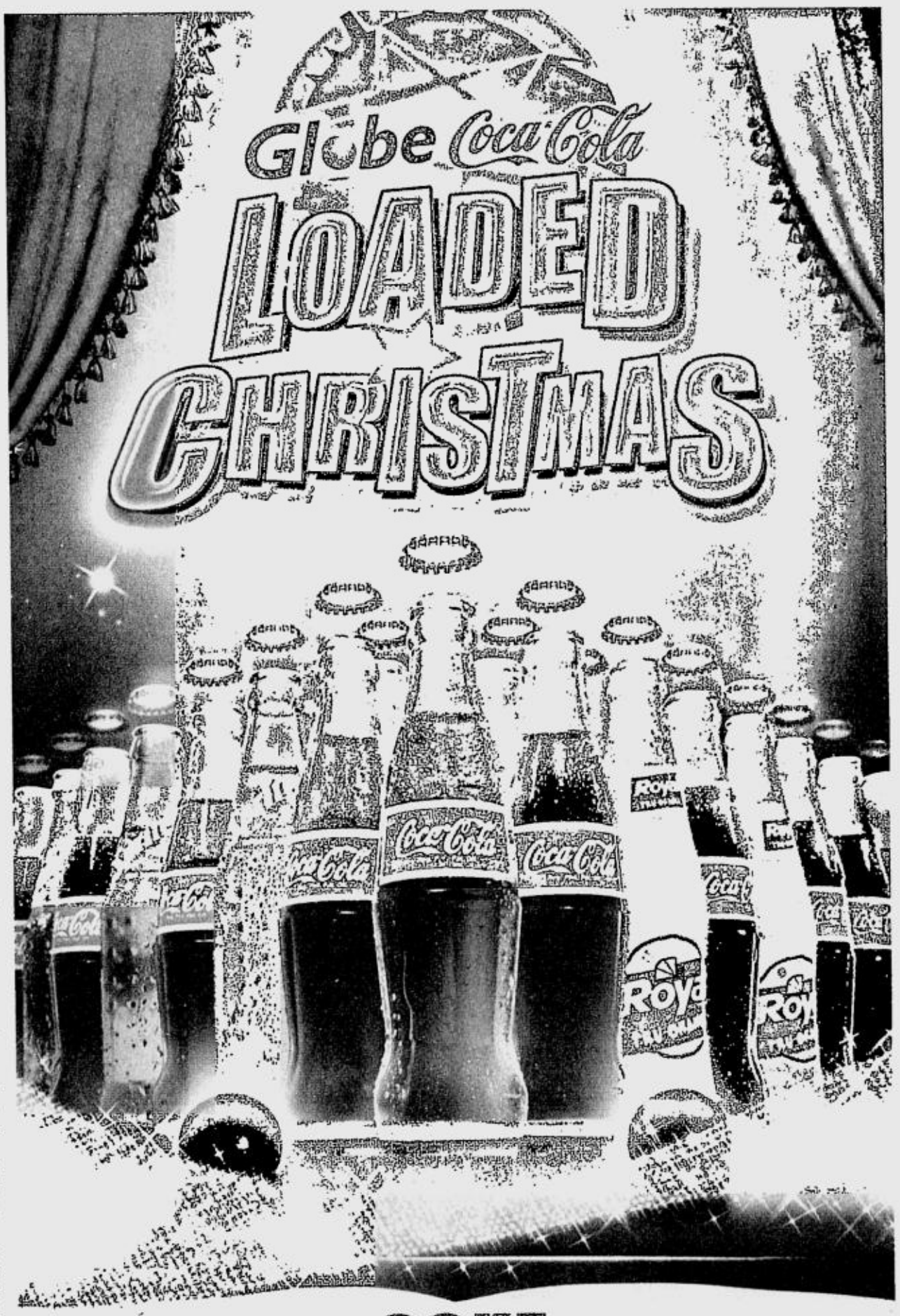
But while these characters may be demonic, with their insatiable lust and greed, there are others in Culaba's infernal universe that are merely victims of the large-scale urban chicanery.

Obviously Culaba thinks everybody is part of the national malaise—rich and poor, the mighty and the lowly.

Culaba's brand of social realism has hit its mark. He has forced us to see ourselves as part of the national horror show. His works are a mirror of our people's transgressions.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

MALANG, SATURDAY GROUP PAINT DAVAO
Select members of the Saturday Group recently opened the show "Davao Impressions" at the Asia Art and 828 Galleries at the Shangri-La Mall. The exhibit shows the place as uniquely depicted by artists, who were recently in Davao in cooperation with Cebu Pacific, Seagull Resorts and the Department of Tourism. The exhibit runs until the end of the month.



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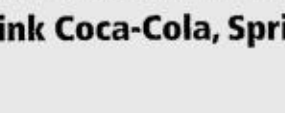

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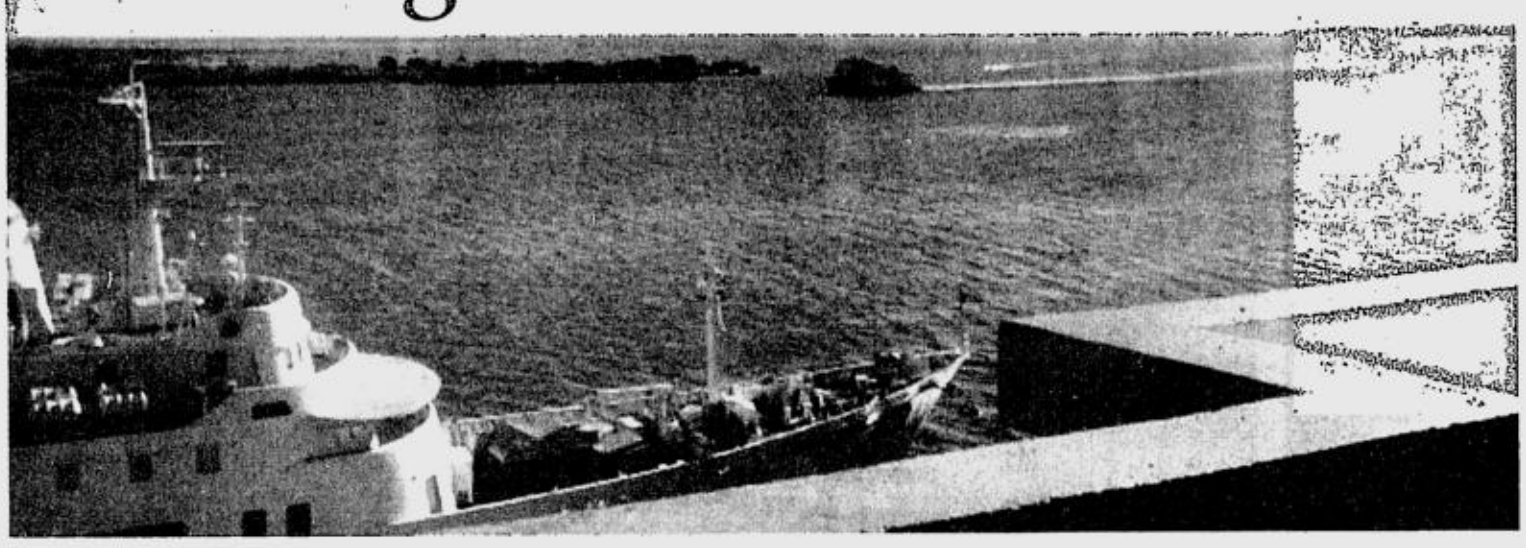
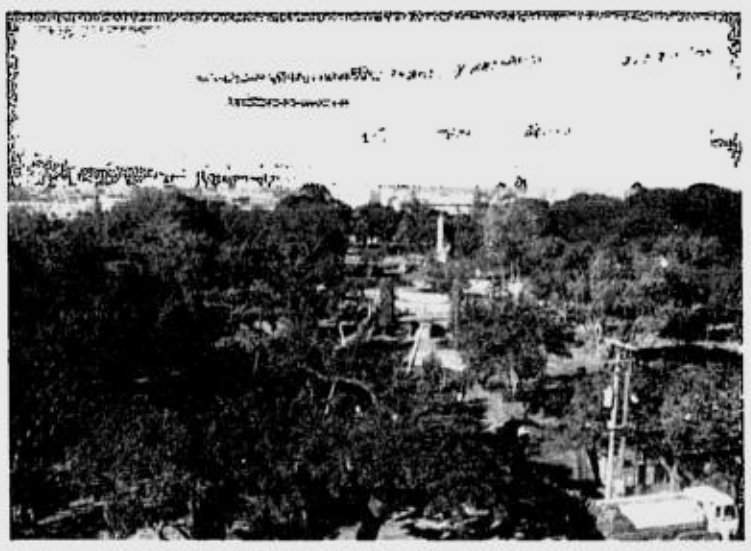
Reviving the Cebu waterfront



THE VIEW from the roof deck of Cebu Customs House shows its proximity to the sea.

THE MAJESTIC main staircase of the Cebu Customs House



PLAZA Independencia in front of the Cebu Customs House and beside historic Fort San Pedro

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

IN THE VISAYAN Islands, people and places are just a sail away from each other. This is even more pronounced today when fast craft skim the waters to arrive on neighboring islands in just a matter of hours.

On a memorable fast-craft voyage I took from Dumaguete to Cebu, the Visayan island culture opened up before my eyes. The view of the coast was absolutely more interesting than the violent video playing at full volume for the passengers' relaxation.

Looking out of the window, I saw a passing succession of stunning Spanish-colonial fortress-churches along the shores of the southern coast of Cebu island, large and imposing 18th-century structures standing squarely on high ground in full view of the sea, their squat bell towers as lookouts to spot any raids coming from the water.

Towns collected around churches and each cluster of houses faced the sea. All the front doors in each town, from church to government buildings and homes, opened toward the sea in a welcoming gesture to receive its seafaring population.

The life I saw undoubtedly focused on the sea.

Harbors were the landmarks of the era, gateways between sea and land where passenger and cargo boats docked, areas that eventually developed into the hub of each coastal city.

The Cebu harbor was the biggest in the region, the primary transportation and cargo hub of the Visayas, a distinction the city has continued to build upon as a way of maintaining its economic supremacy in the region.

Reminders of eras long gone still stand in the port area of Cebu. Fort San Pedro survives from the 16th century when the Spanish declared Cebu the first capital of the Philippines.

Colonial icons

Within walking distance from the fort are Cebu Cathedral, Basilica del Santo Niño and the Cross of Magellan, all nationally recognized colonial icons, evidence of Cebu's being the oldest city in the country.

The American era brought new prosperity, shown in the structures built around the existing Spanish ones in the harbor vicinity. A new Cebu City Hall and other government buildings were built. More permanent warehouse structures rose near the docks.

In later years, the roads radiating away from the harbor developed into Cebu's main business and shopping district.

For many generations, dockside warehouses received cargo, banks and commercial establishments did businesses nearby, students went to school, and authorities governed from the city hall a block away.

The area was Cebu's nerve center, where practically all of the political, religious, educational and business activities took place.

Once it was also the place for entertainment, still the location of the landmark Eddie's Log Cabin, probably the oldest restaurant in Cebu that continues to operate in an area no longer as wholesome as it was a generation ago.

Then the inevitable happened. The harbor relocated. Malls and new commercial developments enticed Cebuanos away from the old center. Cebu "developed" quickly.

Overnight, its image changed into the typical Philippine urban model for a "developed" city, rapidly building a collection bland, generic architecture, stripping away much of its greenery in favor of concrete, and demolishing its heritage buildings.

For over a decade, buildings in the old harbor area stood empty. The old structures had no place in the Cebu boom.

Now, Vice Mayor Michael Rama advocates revitalization to breathe new life into that forgotten part of the city.

Revitalization differs from redevelopment process, which simply replaces old with new. Revitalization recycles old buildings, reusing them to fulfill new functions, brings back life and activity to an area while maintaining the historic identity of the area. Most importantly, local residents participate in the improved quality of life of their area.

The former Cebu Customs Building is currently undergoing architectural reuse as the new Malacañang of the South, the President's Cebu residence.

It is to be the centerpiece of the harbor area.

Re-landscaping

Rama tapped the Cebu Parks and Playgrounds Foundation, United Architects of the Philippines, and Philippine Association of Landscape Architects to plan the re-landscaping of Plaza Independencia, the public garden in front of Fort San Pedro leading to the rear of the new Malacañang of the South.

The buildings in the area, a collection of Spanish colonial buildings, pre-World War II structures in the Art Deco style, warehouses whose concrete walls are embossed with decorative patterns, a few heritage houses, have all been documented and inventoried by the Cebu Heritage Conservation Council, has gone into in-depth research to determine the heritage value of each structure. Legislation to protect the heritage is planned.

Under the guidance of Vice Mayor Rama, a revitalization plan for the area will be prepared. It will focus on the heritage of the old Cebu harbor as the impetus for reviving the area as one of the more important centers of Cebu life.

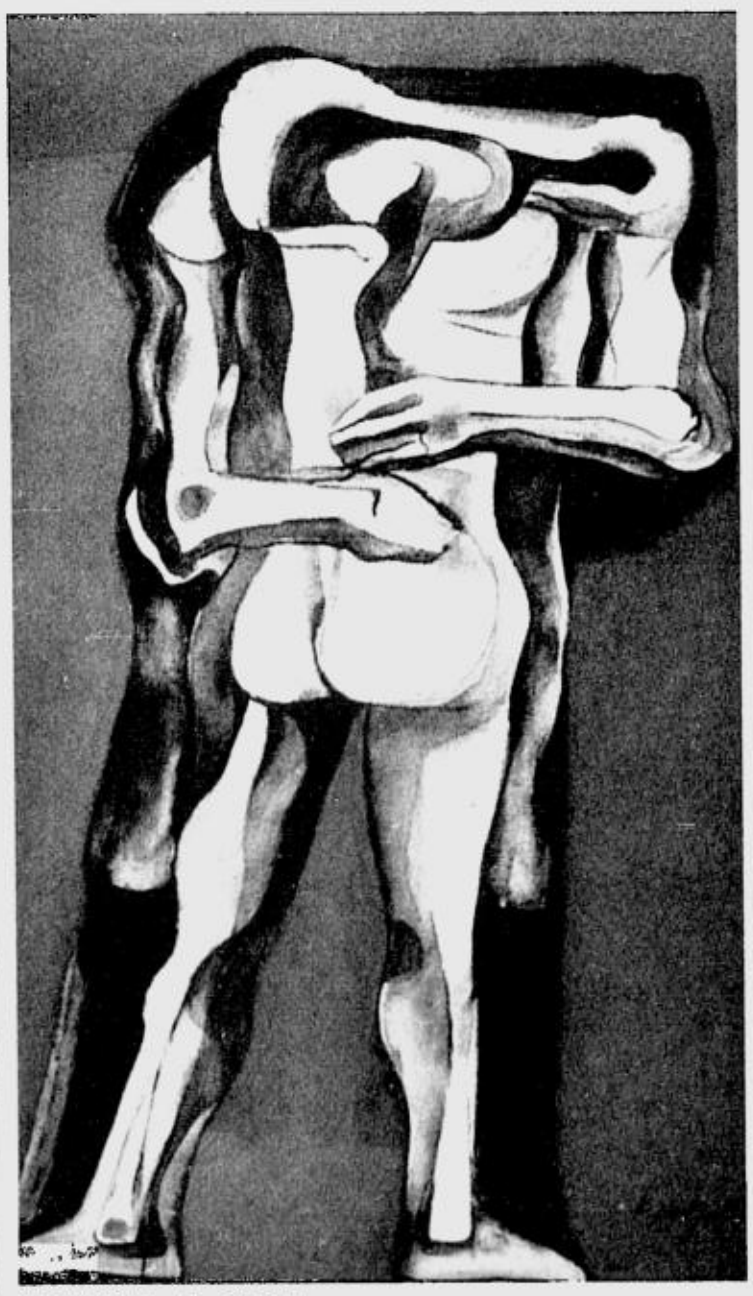
To return life to the area, warehouses will be recycled as shops and offices. Streets will be pedestrianized and the area regreened. Examples of similar projects include the dynamic waterfront areas of San Francisco, Sydney and Singapore.

The community is seen to be a vital force in the revitalization of the area. They will participate in livelihood programs designed to provide income but also to establish a pride of place in the residents that will empower them to be active in the preservation of their neighborhood.

The pioneering project is all about reestablishing lost pride of place for the Cebuano, one that hopefully will develop as a prime example in the Philippines of how heritage is a cornerstone for development and nation-building.

E-mail the author at afvillalon @hotmail.com

Ang Kiukok at Finale



"LOVERS," by Ang Kiukok

VISUAL ARTS

FINALE Makati (4/L, La O Arcade, Pasay Road cor. Makati Avenue) presents old works on paper by National Artist Ang Kiukok on Dec. 16-Jan. 10, 2005. The National Artist's style is characterized by sharp, angular forms and passionate colors. In this show, he does variations on the human figure. Call 8151813 or 8104071.

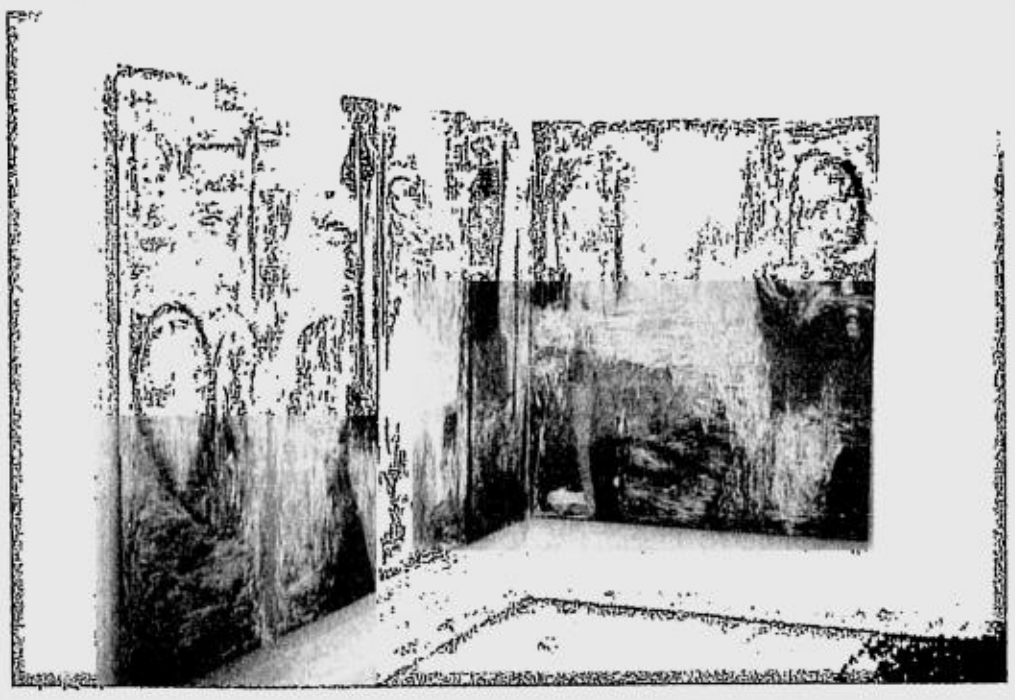
FINALE Art Gallery (Megamall) mounts the latest paintings of Francesca Enriquez on Dec. 14. The exhibit features luxe home interiors. The artist orchestrates a broad spectrum of colors, echoed in the patterns of wallpaper and furniture. The show runs until Jan. 8, 2005. Call 6342410 or 6342411.

GALLERY 139 presents Winnie Go's "Hugis 2004" until Dec. 15 at 3/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati. The exhibit showcases functional pieces in clay.

FERNWOOD Gardens (71 Cenacle Drive, Sanville Subd., QC) features Ricky Montilla's "Subtle Fernwood Impressions" on Dec. 15-22. The subjects include ducks, swans, flowers and other tropical plants, and a *koi* pond. Call 9262493 and 9286458.

LE SOUFFLÉ Restaurant features Joana Regina Lontoc Alberto's paintings on angels until Dec. 31. The artworks are also showcased in Angels 2005 calendar, which can be purchased for P100. Proceeds will go to the Ephesus Home for Girls in Guiguinto, Bulacan. Call 0917-8176919 or 8126124.

PINTÔ Art Gallery and Boston Gallery holds the group exhibit "Alay 8" until Jan. 22, 2005. Pintô is at Sierra Madre, Grand Heights, Antipolo City, Rizal. Boston Gallery is at 72 Boston St., Cubao, QC. Call 6971015 or 7229205.



ROCK Drilon's recent paintings are on exhibit at Crucible Gallery in SM Megamall. "Wrestling with the Left Brain" runs until Dec. 16.

ANGEL painting by Joana Alberto

A heady trip through . . .

From page C3

fabrics and objects to create 24 out-of-this-world furniture pieces. This artist's avant-gardism extends to embellishing benches with carabao horns, gun holsters and the gold-plated halo of a *santo*.

Novel subjects

Trek Valdizno's 11 pieces in oil and varnish on canvas are variations on his abstraction of red on white, some impastoed for maximum texture, others thickly varnished so as to shine.

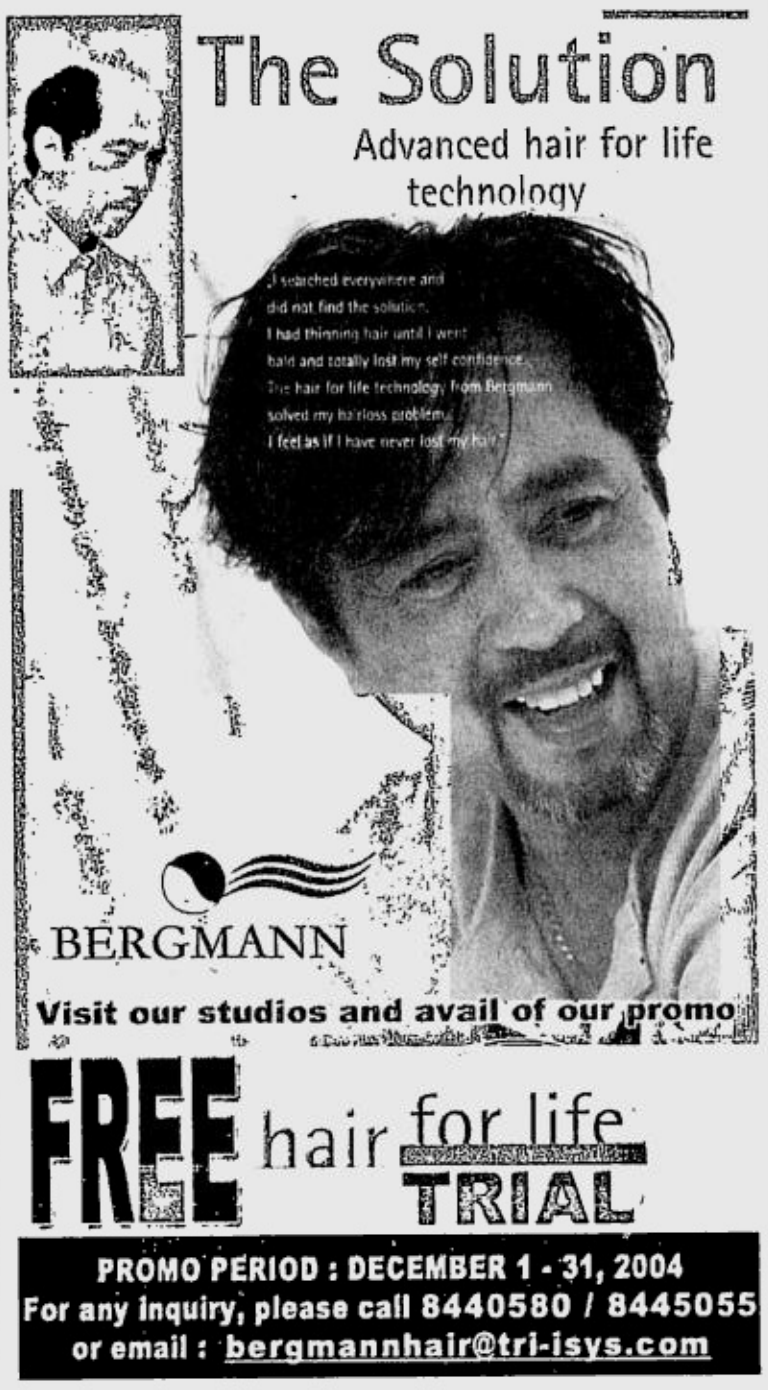
Mostly untitled and composed of massive blots of red dramatically applied on white, the series is reminiscent of Baumeister's "Mortaruru with Red Overhead," or Motherwell's "Elegy to the Spanish Republic." As such, Valdizno's art should be halfway between Abstract Expressionism and abstract Surrealism.

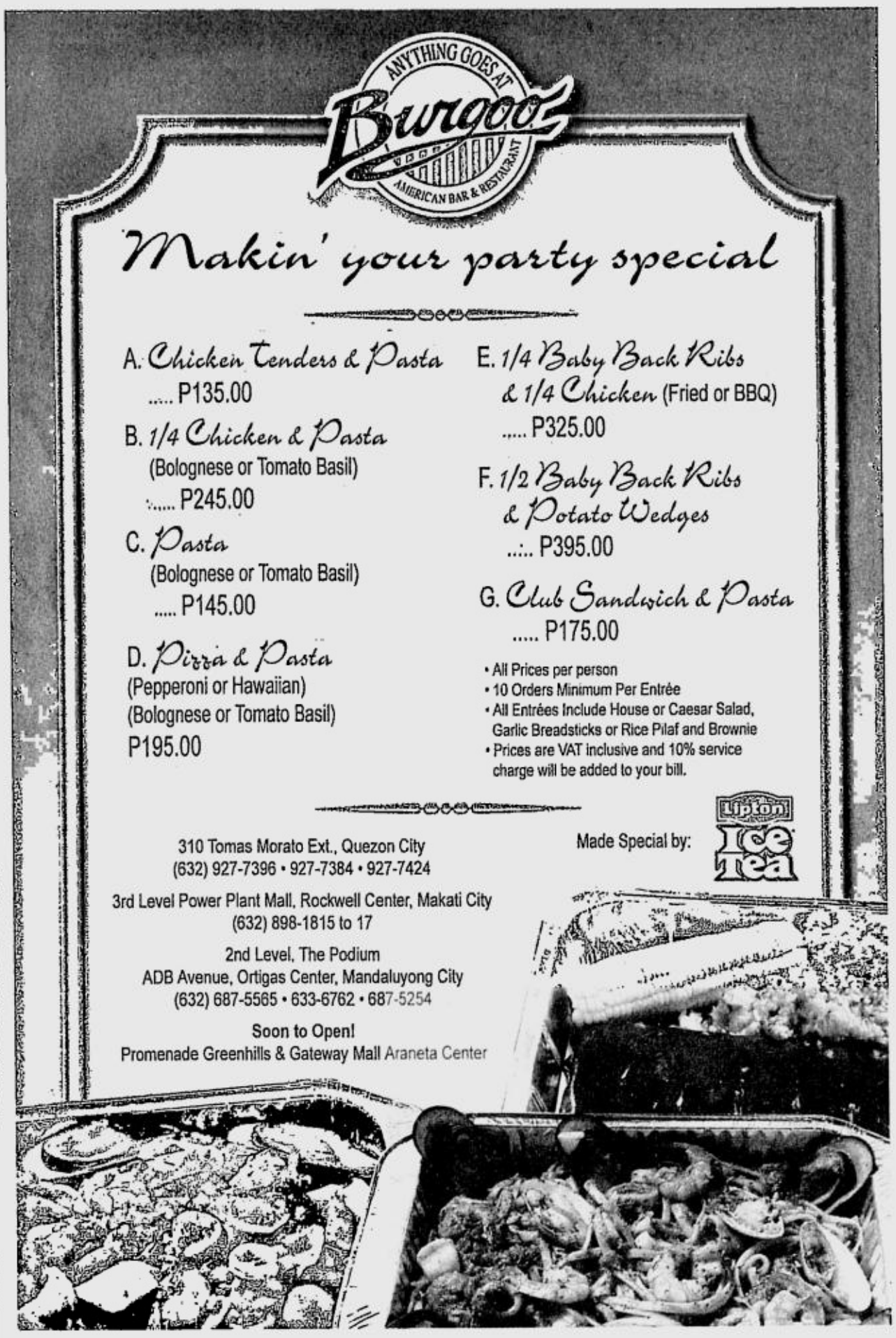
Pardo de Leon's nine pieces in oil on canvas, in ochre and pinkish brown, are based on photographs the artist took of surfers on Siargao.

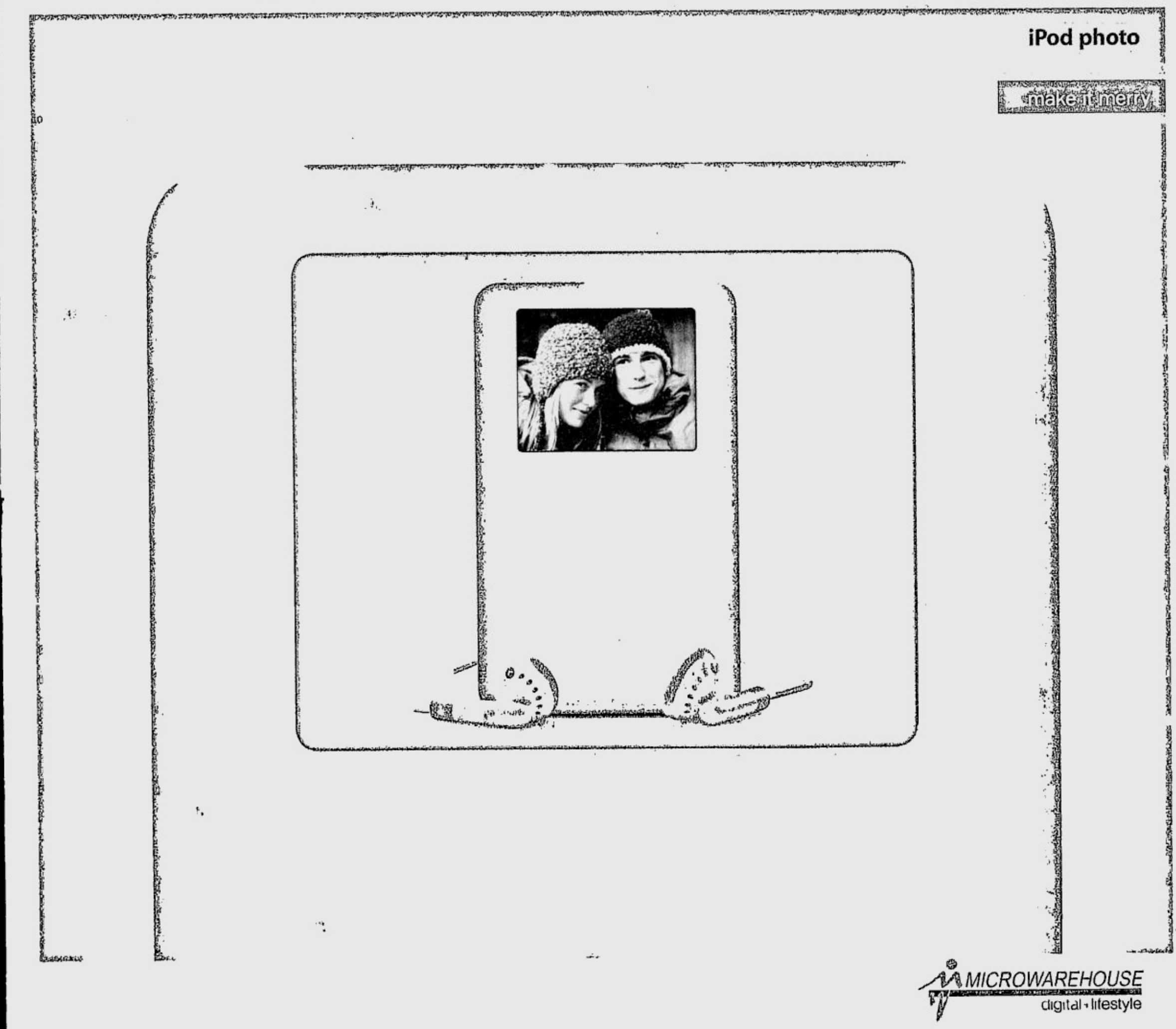
Four are closeup portraits of nipples ("Chip," "Stephanie," "Nelde," one unnamed); four of navels ("Roel's Navel" 1-2, "Michael's Navel," "Ricardo"); and one of the cleft of a derriere ("Michael's Butt").

Meticulous in detail though not quite hyperrealist, this is surprising art simply for its novelty. Why, no one has thought of these anatomical protuberances before as worthy subjects for art by themselves. Rendered in large canvas, each navel or nipple is practically thrust to the viewer's face.

The daring of the avant-garde and the inventiveness of the young meet in this show and produce artworks of such diversity and richness they could be representatives of our visual arts now obtaining. Heady, heady (in both senses of the word).







Globe PLATINUM

House of Art

Colors of compassion for the Virlanie Foundation

The Ayala Museum's M Cafe is the perfect venue to showcase the special art pieces at Globe Platinum's House of Art.

The party's in full swing with Manila's A-list crowd in attendance!

Art and altruism were the bywords for Manila's hip and stylish set at the "Globe Platinum House of Art: Works by Ivan Acuña" at the Ayala Museum's M Café. Two special art pieces exclusive for Globe Platinum were on auction for two consecutive nights, on December 6 and 7, 2004. Globe Platinum subscribers were also entitled to a special privilege discount on all artworks purchased.

Part of the proceeds will be donated to the Virlanie Foundation, a local nonprofit organization that provides social services for abandoned and abused children. Since 1992, Virlanie has helped underprivileged kids through its housing, education, and support programs. They presently have 300 children, aged 4 to 18, in their care.

The artist, Ivan Acuña, is already well-known in the country as an abstract painter and has recently held exhibits at Prestige Cars BMW and Century Park Hotel, among others. His abstract oil pieces for the House of Art exhibit are all done in muted metallics like gold, silver, bronze – and yes, platinum. The two works on auction for Globe Platinum also had bold accents in black and bright primary hues. "My works are all about texture and color. The one I did in platinum is actually very minimalist," says the artist. He further describes the unique way by which he created the artworks: going beyond brushstrokes, he burned the paint to create interesting textures, in the tradition of American abstract expressionist painters who experimented with unconventional forms and techniques. This distinctiveness evokes Globe Platinum's spirit of sophistication and innovation.

The event was organized by chic jetsetter Carmina Sanchez and hosted by society columnists Maurice Arcache and Pepper Teehankee for the first evening, and by young socialites Celine Lopez, Ipe Cruz, and JR Isaac for the second evening. Both nights were graced by prominent figures in the business and art scenes. Among those spotted at the M Café were former Iloilo 2nd District Rep. Albertito Lopez with wife former Guimaras Governor Emily Relucio-Lopez, banker-entrepreneur Raul Manzano, international businessman Sinai Djemal and his wife Sigalit, fashion mavens Lulu Tan-Gan and Kate Torralba, interior designer Anton Mendoza, and Mrs. Tessie Luz, wife of National Artist Arturo Luz. The café's sumptuous food and drinks perfectly complemented the lively conversation among the guests, and the swinging sounds by DJs Ellan Jabayeb and Erwin Edralin set a classy, upbeat mood for the affair.

Long-time art lover and collector George Salud sent in his bid through text and won the silent auction on the first evening. Evidently pleased with the new addition to his collection, Salud says, "For me, art is a matter of personal taste, and Ivan Acuña's style really appeals to me." He already owns a much larger piece by Acuña, which he acquired about two years ago. To cap the affair, Globe representatives raffled off brand-new mobile phones as a surprise treat for lucky Globe Platinum subscribers.

This event also continued an admirable trend started by Globe Platinum when it presented an exhibit and silent auction of paintings by noted artist Isabel Diaz earlier this year. Apart from being the ultimate symbol of prestige and luxury in mobile communications, Globe Platinum supports and promotes art and culture as part of the vibrant lifestyle of its elite members.

Existing subscribers to any Globe Plan with an average monthly usage of at least P4,000 (exclusive of taxes and adjustments) for the last twelve months and with good credit standing, as well as new subscribers to any Platinum, G-Plan, or fully consumable G-Flex Plan at P5,000, P7,000, or P10,000 can avail of the exclusive privileges that come with a Globe Platinum membership.

Ivan Acuña with Kailash Ramchandani of LMK Commercial

Mr. Tony Gonzales and Mrs. Tessie Luz enjoying a pleasant evening with the artist

The artist (center) with Paul Edouard (left) and ADB exec Enrico Canzio

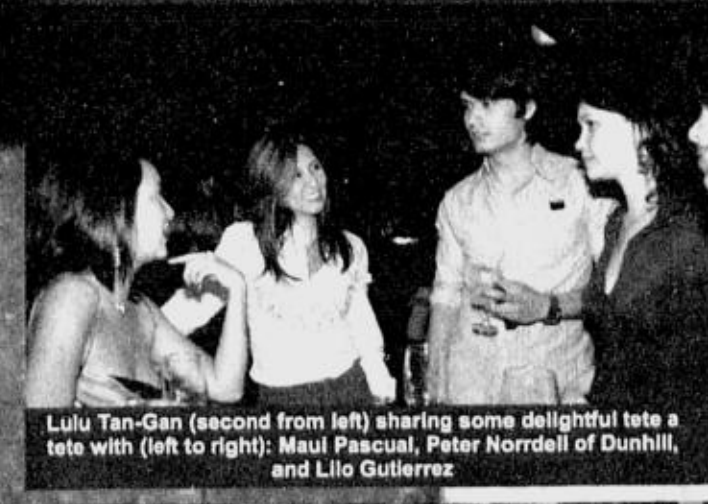
The winning bidder: art collector George Salud with the Globe Platinum special art pieces

Designer Kate Torralba (left) and Kristine Santiago making the scene at M Café

Globe Platinum gives a warm welcome to their privileged guests.

DJ Erwin Edralin kept guests on their feet with funky beats.

Guests relished Acuña's art and the café's delectable fare amidst relaxed conversation.


Lulu Tan-Gan (second from left) sharing some delightful tete a tete with (left to right): Maui Pascual, Peter Norrdell of Dunhill, and Lilo Gutierrez

Hosts Pepper Teehankee, Maurice Arcache, and Celine Lopez with Joji Dingcong and Anthony Joes

Flanking Acuña's artwork are (left to right): event organizer Carmina Sanchez, Globe Platinum Senior Marketing Manager Kristelle Dizon, the artist, and Globe Platinum Senior Product Manager Cookie Uy.

BMW Philippines Corporate Communications Manager Lito German with wife Ditas (center) and Globe Telecom's Sheila Sarmiento (right)

Islander

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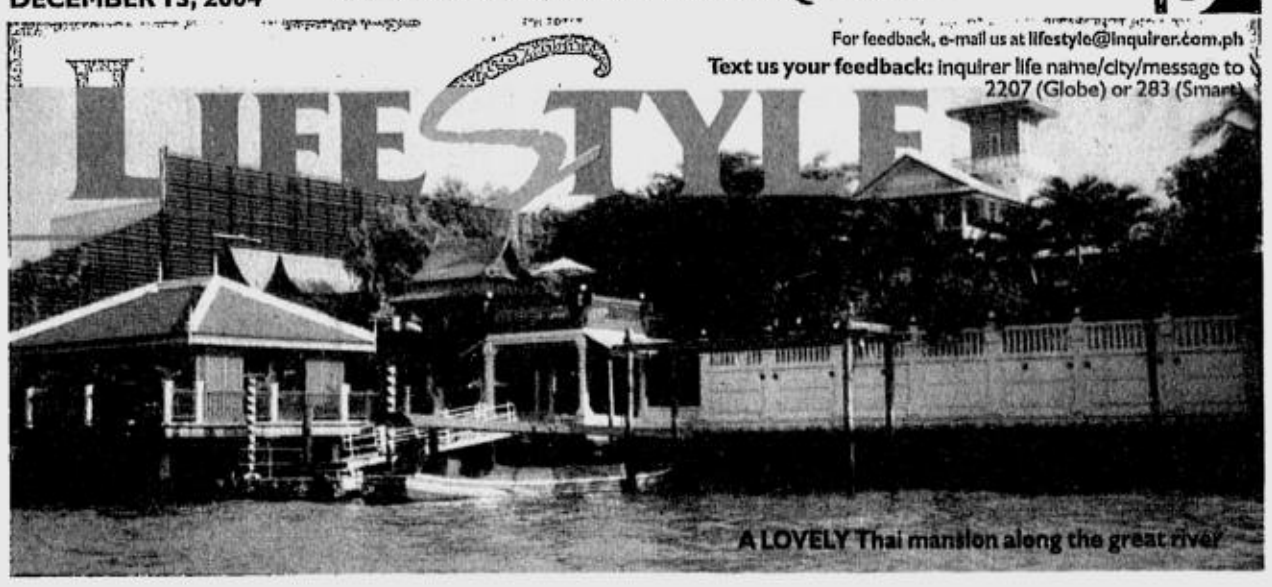

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A bend in the river

Bangkok's Chao Phraya River is vibrant with life while our own Pasig stagnates

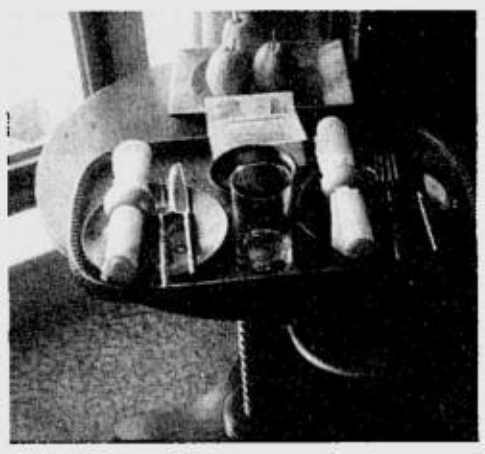
ALL4ART

Bea Zobel Jr.

ON A RECENT trip to Bangkok, I had the good fortune of visiting a beautiful hotel, the Mandarin Oriental, which was right on the river. The interiors and the facilities were impeccable. This was not surprising since the Oriental has been named one of the best in the world.

What struck me most was the fact that there were many local craft pieces integrated into the décor of the rooms. Certainly the Oriental could have afforded the best of imported items from the West. Yet there was a deliberate attempt to ensure that the overall look of the place projected Thai images.

Everywhere one looked, there were baskets, weaving and pottery. Evidently even such a respected institution like the Oriental believes traditional crafts are world-class and should form part of any contemporary chic environment.



TRADITIONAL craft touches in the Oriental Hotel

Another example of how Oriental Hotel honors Thai traditions is its vibrant connection with Bangkok's great river, the Chao Phraya.

Indeed, one of the best features of the hotel is its lovely terrace with its spectacular fluvial views. People actually sought out the tables nearest the water.

Watching the light playing on the waves as boats glided past, I could not help thinking of the sharp contrast provided by our poor little Pasig in Manila.

Unlike the Manileños of today, the people of Bangkok have always celebrated their river. A few years ago, there was even a major festival and tourism program promoting what they lovingly address as the River of Kings. Can you imagine the Pasig as a tourist attraction like that?

Oriental Hotel did more than its share of enhancing river awareness. I noted there was even a whole compound that was an extension of the main hotel on the other bank, opposite the terrace. This compound featured a restaurant, spa, gym, and even a cooking school, all housed in traditional Thai buildings set in lovely gardens.

Treat

The best part was that one crossed over on old-fashioned ferry boats. The boat ride was a treat in itself: the cool breeze coming off the water, the fascinating barges passing by, the carved trimmings of the ferries.

One could just spend the whole day going back and forth, and to think you haven't even left the hotel!

I also had the chance of taking an evening dinner cruise. My sister, Patsy, commented how river life seemed so romantic. I thought to myself that perhaps she was a very well-behaved water lily in her previous life! In fact, she was so good that she was rewarded by being allowed to come back... as Bea's sister!

But, joking aside, it was interesting to watch people work, play or just relax by the water.

We also sailed by some incredible sights such as the gorgeously illuminated Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn) as well as the magnificent Grand Palace.

We saw many elegant mansions, proving that waterside properties were really highly valued. My mother mused about how she wished that a Bangkok heritage enthusiast could rescue and restore some of the quaint but crumbling buildings that we had seen.

A BEND/ D2

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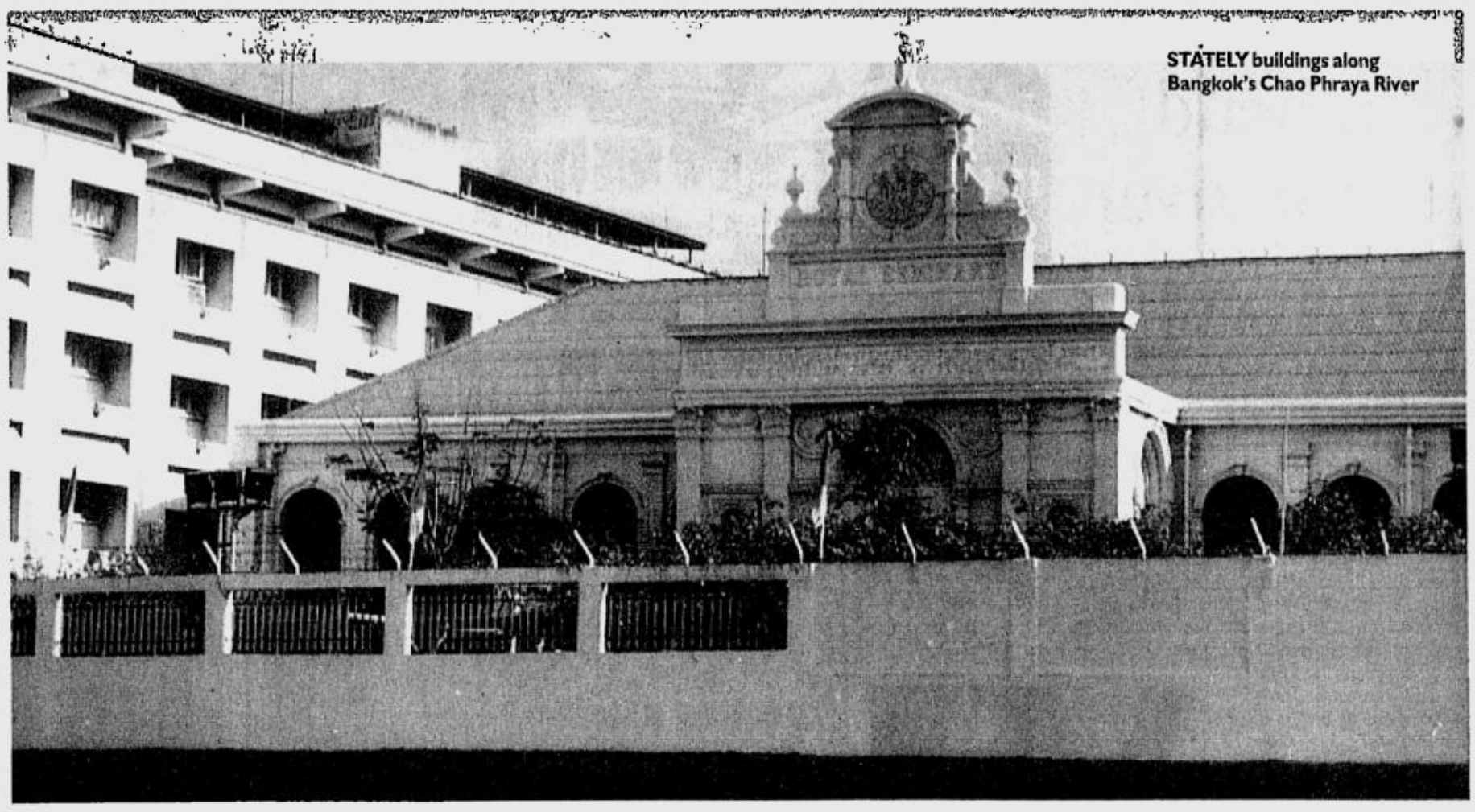
A bend in the river

From page D1

Another notable aspect of river life were the many ferries that still plied their regular routes up and down the Chao Phraya.

The guidebooks proclaim that they are actually a convenient, inexpensive and comfortable way to see some of the main attractions of Bangkok. The locals must agree as the ferries I saw were always packed with passengers.

What I found especially remarkable was that the city's ultra-modern sky train actually had a special station where people can get off to transfer to the river boats. Talk about interconnected transportation systems! One can cross over from a 21st-century vehicle to a type of vessel that has been around for centuries.



STATELY buildings along Bangkok's Chao Phraya River

Foul Pasig

After I came back from Bangkok, I had the chance to take a quick ferry ride across the Pasig. I had written about this in a previous article.

Of course, the trip was not at all romantic! But it was still interesting to see how the city looks from the water.

I noticed that like Bangkok some old houses faced the Pasig. It was probably once quite pleasant to live right on the banks.

Districts like Quiapo were veined with little branches of the river called *esteros*. These used to help cool the city. Little boats could deliver goods right to one's door step.

Professor Butch Zialcita writes about how lovely it was to have an *estero* behind your room. His grandmother even used to catch fish for the family dinner from her window in their Quiapo residence. Sadly our *esteros* are now clogged with garbage.

In contrast, I once visited a gracious Bangkok home (the Jim Thompson house) made even more charming because of its pleasant proximity to the Thai equivalent of the *estero*, called the *klong*.

I am told that, at one time, Magsaysay Lines tried to revive the Pasig River ferries. This was a move designed to provide alternative transportation means, helping to decongest our roads.

One of the reasons why the ferries were never popular was the fact that the passengers found the smell of the foul waters so offensive!

So, why is the Chao Phraya so much a part of Bangkok life while our Pasig is so neglected? I can imagine that the reasons are legion. But as my friend Anne Young once commented, if more people (especially among our elite) found use for the rivers, if the rivers were really part of our lives, the more reason we would have to keep them clean.

We can really see that, unlike Manila, Bangkok maximizes its rivers. There are many ferries, there are many parks and cafés beside the water.

Endangered park

A final example will help show how important it is to reorient ourselves again toward our rivers. A valiant group of people called the Winner Foundation has been struggling to save a little forest patch called the Arroceros Park right on the bank of the Pasig. This verdant enclave is one of the last green lungs of the city.

My mother loves to tell me about watching families stroll beneath the trees and cool themselves in the river breezes. She enjoys witnessing the artists who find sanctuary in the park as they paint views of the Pasig.

Yet even as I write this, the park is in danger! The city government plans to erect a new building in the park, thus compromising the future of the forest.

How sad that the importance of this little green refuge is so undervalued. We should see it as an essential resource to develop an ecological awareness among our youth so that they see how interconnected everything is: the city, the people, the trees and even the river.

With such an awareness being enhanced by little pockets like the Arroceros, perhaps we can dream of a better time in the future when our rivers are alive again.

We could spend the day with the whole family taking relaxing cruises (no road traffic messes, no parking hassles!) and stopping at points along the route to see a puppet show or visit a museum. Why not?

AAP awards ceremonies set on Dec. 17 at GSIS

THE ART Association of the Philippines (AAP) will formally confer the awards and prizes for the AAP Annual Art Competition, on Dec. 17, 6 p.m., at the GSIS Museo ng Sining, Finance Center, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

AAP president Fidel Sarmiento said the various winners in the categories of painting, mixed media, sculpture, drawing, digital art, photography and printmaking will be announced and honored during the ceremonies.

Certificates of recognition will also be given to winners of the honorable mention prizes.

Guests of honor during the ceremonies are NCCA chair Evelyn Pantig and executive director Cecille Guidote-Alvarez.

The NCCA is one of the principal sponsors of the AAP Annual while the GSIS has served as the regular venue of the AAP Annual, which will be on view until the end of December.

AAP president Fidel Sarmiento

Call 3030907 or 0918-2765280.

Book relives the romance of the abaca trade

REVISIT the golden era of the local abaca trade and catch snippets of historic events in Spanish-era Philippines with the new book "Across the Seas: Three Brothers Find New Lives in Colonial Philippines" by Antonio Sievert.

Published by New Day Publishers, the 228-page book is a historical narrative about the saga of the Sievert brothers—Carlos, Jorge and Jose—who left their home in Cadiz, Spain, toward the turn of the century for the Philippine Islands in search of a more rewarding life.

In their sojourn, the brothers met Don Andres Reyes, an abaca trader from Samar, and learned from him their adopted country's turbulent past which affect both Christians and Muslims, and its cultural and economic transformation.

The Sieverts then become one of the major players in the abaca industry in Samar province, regarded as one of the archipelago's abaca capitals.

The book traces the route of the abaca trade and provides the reader with a vivid account of how abaca or Manila hemp, came into prominence as an export commodity sought worldwide.

But more than the account of the abaca trade, Sievert provides a perspective of Philippine history from a personal glimpse of a historical drama as it unfolds, is recorded and handed down from one generation to another.

It is this personal glimpse that provides the reader with a front-seat view of how the country's political, social and economic development evolved. The author highlights the inner strength and spirit of a people who had survived the rigors of political and economic transformation called development.

A descendant of the book's main characters, the Florida-based author has traveled the world as a civil engineer, but was always curious about his peculiar Filipino-Spanish heritage.

The quest for answers took him to Spain on numerous occasions since 1977. Now retirement has given him the opportunity to fulfill the dream of telling his forebear's story set in a chapter of his homeland's history.

"Across the Seas" is available at leading book stores nationwide. Call 9288046 and 9275982 or e-mail newdayorders@edsamail.com.ph.

"MARANAO (Naghinoktok)"

Julie Lluch at Duemila

GALLERIA Duemila (SM Megamall) mounts Julie Lluch's "Terracotta" on Dec. 15. The show consists of sculptures of Maranao women calculated to spark contemplation.

In the full figure sculptures like "Maranao (Nagpahulay)" and "Maranao (Nangadhi)," Lluch portrays the women in various stages of repose—sitting, squatting and sleeping. As sculpted the women come across as strong and solid. They are shrouded in veils and cloth yet the roundness of their bodies can be discerned under the intricately rendered folds.

The terracotta technique enhances the earthiness of the women. Lluch worked on the sculpture from life and pictures. The mass and volume of the pieces are expertly handled that they give the works a riveting presence. Lluch also painted on some of the sculptures.

An AB Philosophy graduate from the University of Santo Tomas, Lluch is also a designer and filmmaker.

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Lahat ng ito'y nangyari dahil sa iba't-ibang water service projects at halos round-the-clock na pagtra-trabaho ng Manila Water, isang Ayala company at concessionaire ng MWSS.

At simula pa lang ito. Sa kanilang ika-7 taon, mas marami pang gagawin ang Manila Water. Ang na-invest na P9 bilyon ay dadagdagan pa para sa 2007, aabot na sa 5 milyong tao sa East Zone ang makakaranas ng tuluy-tuloy na pagdaloy ng tubig. At mas maayos na pagdaloy ng buhay. 24 oras.

Manila Water

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* Marikina, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Makati, malaking bahagi ng Quezon City, San Andres at Sta. Ana sa Manila. Kasama rin dito ang San Juan, Taguig, Pateros, at Cainta, Taytay, Antipolo, San Mateo at Montalban sa Rizal.

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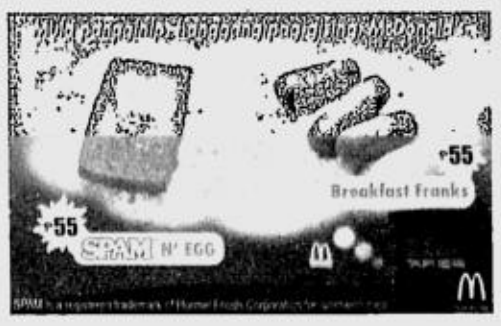

RUSSIAN conductor Mark Kadin and Rodel F. Colmenar

Concert evokes Russian magnificence

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

SINCE its founding in 1998, the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) has gloriously pursued its mission of enriching the local music concert scene with eminent performances featuring both foreign and local artists.

Its survival speaks of the strong determination of its founder, Rodel F. Colmenar, together with the musicians, to make MPO one of the country's major orchestras, playing the best of classical symphonic and popular music for its growing audience.

CONCERT/ E3

Though young, conductor Kadin was able to convey the true spirit of Tchaikovsky's music

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UST Singers in concert

THE UST Singers recently received the highest prize at the Montreaux festival in Switzerland.

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas Singers, in cooperation with the Philippine Historical Association, National Historical Institute and PhilAm Life, presents "Celebremos: The UST Singers Homecoming Concert," on Dec. 18, at the PhilAm Life Auditorium.

"Celebremos," as its name implies, celebrates the UST Singers' astounding success in their eight-month world tour that started last March and ended in November and covered Europe, US, Mexico and Canada.

Under the baton of professor Fidel Gener Calalang Jr., professor at the UST Conservatory of Music, the UST Singers will show in the three-part concert why they are a much-applauded and awarded chorale both here and abroad.

The UST Singers are known worldwide for their genius in the art of chorale music.

In the last tour alone, they were given the Excellence with Distinction prize and the Ville de Vevey special prize for best interpretation and best programming at the Montreaux International Choral Competition in Switzerland.

They were the Best Choir at the World Choral Festival in Puebla, Mexico. They were also honored in Honolulu, Hawaii by Mayor Jeremy Harris who proclaimed Aug. 20 as UST Singers Day.

The group was the second Filipino artistic act to be given such an honor.

"Celebremos" aims to bring to light the excellence of the UST Singers as well as share with the home crowd their success, and to express their gratitude to all their families, friends and supporters who have helped them in their world tour.

Tickets are sold at P200 for free seating and P1,000 for reserved seating. Call 5366373 or 0915-5812097.

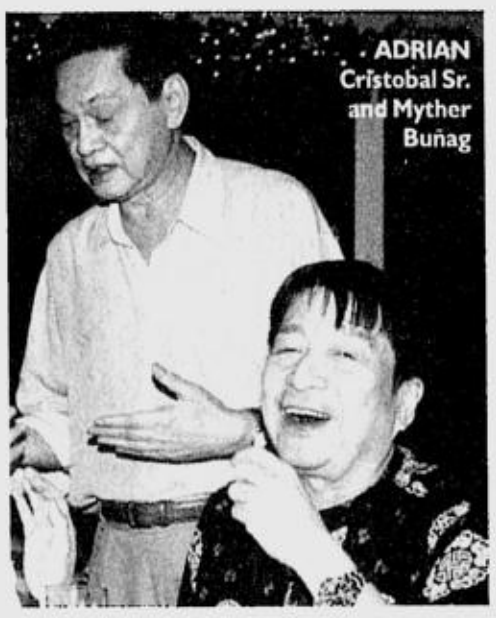
Thursday Club holds recital

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza, Ambassador Antonio Cabangon Chua and former senator Heherzon Alvarez

MANNY Garcia and PCSO chair Sergio Valencia

ADRIAN Cristobal Jr.

THE THURSDAY Club of writers, journalists, politicians and businessmen recently held its quarterly musical soirée at the Myther Club. Featured was soprano Stella Cristobal Arenas



ADRIAN Cristobal Sr. and Myther Buñag

STELLA Cristobal Arenas, soprano

PHOTOS BY BETOY JOHNSON

COLMENAR and homegrown pianist Ingrid Sala Santamaria

Concert evokes Russian magnificence

From page E1

Recently the orchestra wowed Manila's music lovers who watched the fourth in its current concert season series in PhilAm Life Theater.

The concert featured an all-Russian program. "The Magnificent Russia" combined the talents of young Russian conductor Mark Kadin and homegrown pianist Ingrid Sala Santamaria.

The audience turnout was impressive—the hall nearly filled to capacity.

Authoritative

Easily, Kadin earned the admiration of the audience with his authoritative wielding of the baton. Tchaikovsky's Coronation March was rendered with grandeur, festively played in a lush, palpable sound. The audience knew at once that Kadin was a conductor of consequence—indeed, a formidable one.

Youthful dynamism marked his reading of another Tchaikovsky work, the mighty Symphony No. 5 in E. Minor, Op. 64, the evening's main symphonic fare. He avoided triteness; instead, he infused much exuberance to the generally forlorn disposition of the piece.

The pacing did not drag, allowing the unhampered flow of the lyrical thematic ideas that surged into dramatic climaxes. Generally the flavor was Russian, bold and daring.

Kadin let a glimmer of buoyant optimism surface amid the tragic foreboding of the piece, giving the audience a grand time of festive listening.

The first movement was expressively lyrical, with the main idea announced gallantly; the second movement, thank goodness, did not drag, unfolding in a limpid andante, not adagio.

True Russian spirit

The conductor, being a Russian, truly conveyed the essential Tchaikovskian spirit. In the hands of other conductors, the movement would have sounded trite and dragging.

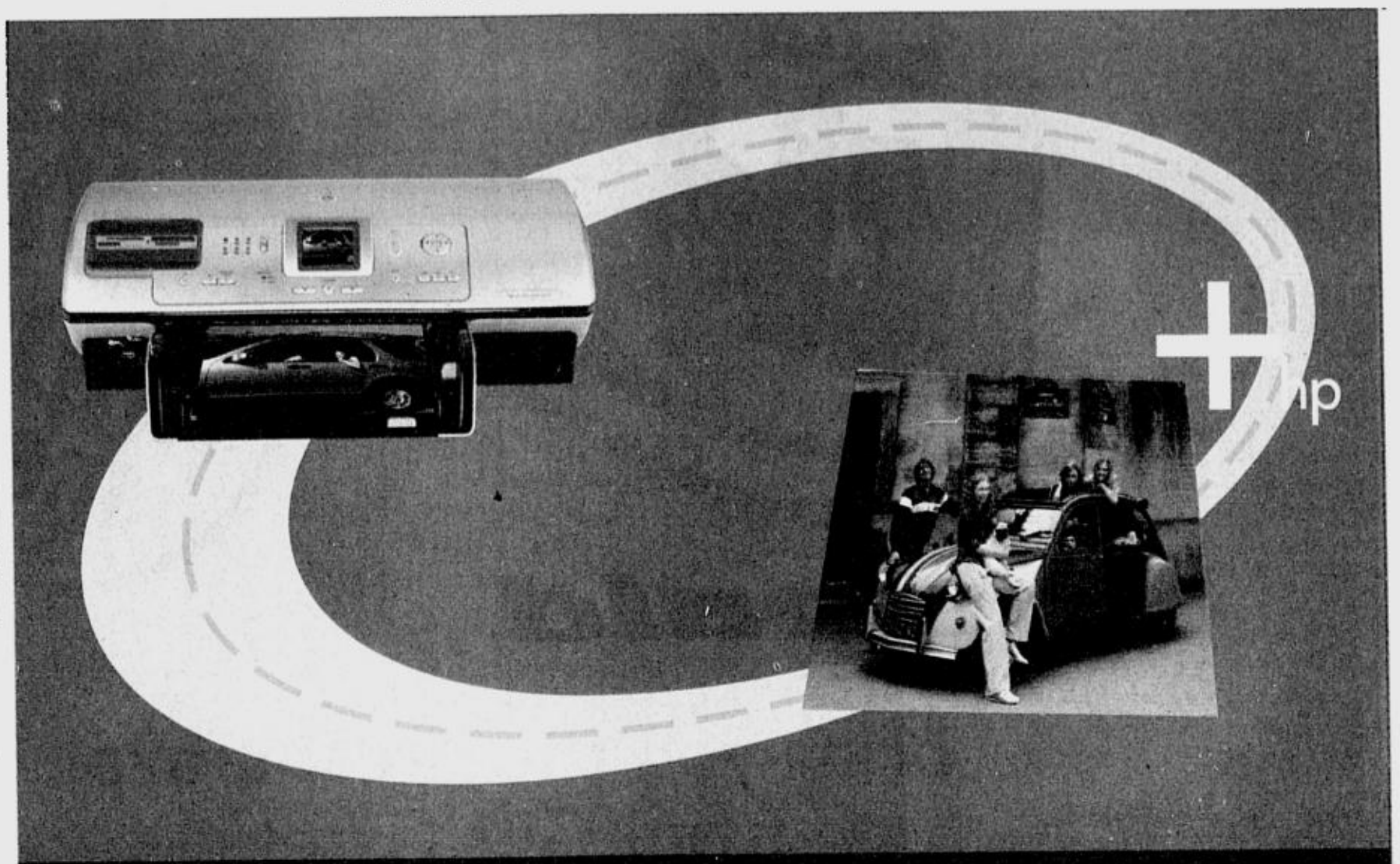
Colmenar, of course, intoned one of the loveliest melodies ever scored for a solo horn, so haunting and noble; the third heightened with marvelous ensemble playing. The final movement was triumphantly sounded with stunning intensity.

Despite some inconsistencies, Santamaria's rendition of Rachmaninoff's Concerto No.3 elicited warm applause from the audience.

Admittedly the performance was Santamaria's first attempt. She played not on a grand Steinway but on a parlor-sized Kawai. Perhaps, adjustments did not work out.

It has now become necessary for pianists to let their fingers skim over unresponsive keys of available pianos in Manila's major theaters.

There is no doubt that, in time, Santamaria will master the piece. In fact, I am dying to hear it played in her next Concerto journey next year.



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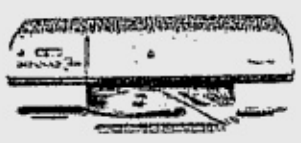

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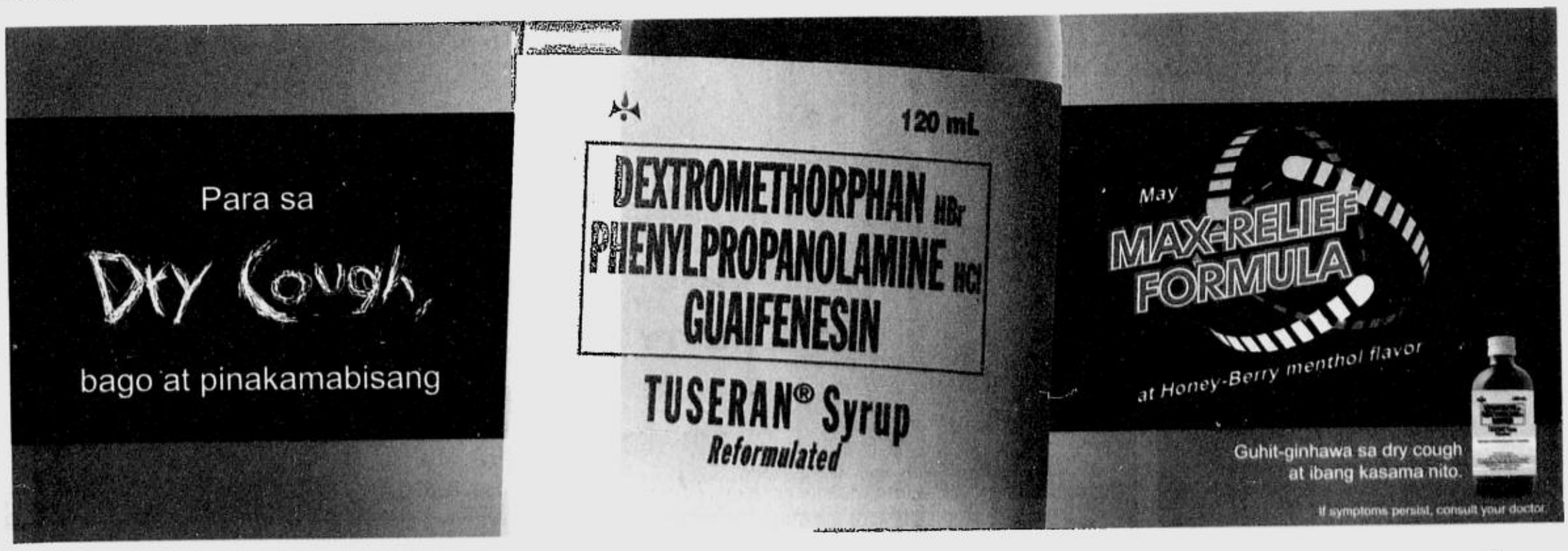

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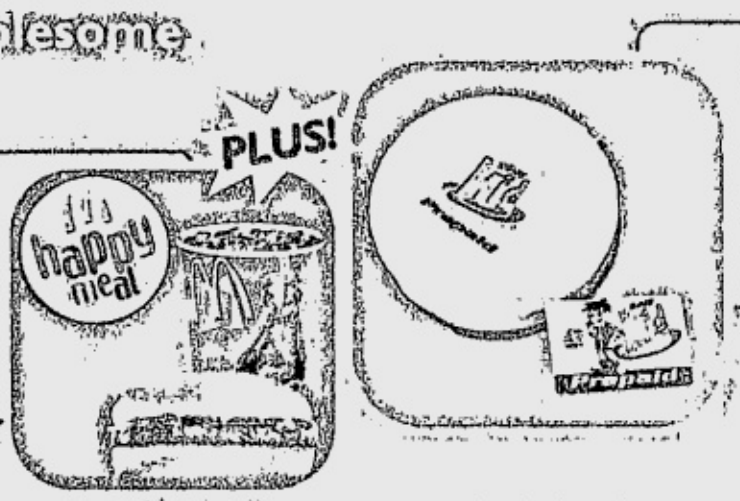

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Nolledo: A tribute and memoir

STORY ON PAGE F2

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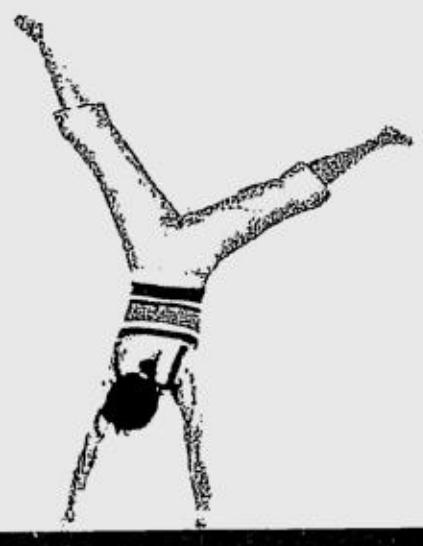

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Nolledo: A tribute and memoir

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE LATE Wilfrido D. Nolledo was one of the bright lights of the Philippines Free Press magazine during the 1960s, along with (the late) National Artist Nick Joaquin, fictionist Gregorio C. Brillantes and poet Jose F. Lacaba.

Nolledo wrote journalistic articles, plays, screenplays and novels; but he is best known as a short-story writer.

His first novel was "But for the Lovers," published in the US during the 1970s, a kind of surrealist tale about World War II which included some Tagalog words and phrases.

"I insisted to the American publisher that these be retained as is," I recall Nolledo saying that once.

The copy of the novel that I read was Nick Joaquin's copy, lent to me by a colleague, Billy Lacaba. And I remember there was this beautiful dedication from Nolledo to Joaquin, in which the former said, "We have kept the faith."

I first met Nolledo, whom his friends called Ding, during the early 1970s shortly after martial law had been imposed upon the country.

I would often go then to Johnny Litton's Mever Films, located at the penthouse of Avenue Hotel in downtown Manila, to visit friends Frankie Clemente and Greg Marquez. They were the ones who informed me that Ding Nolledo was holed up in the hotel writing a screenplay for a Tagalog movie.

So I looked up the distinguished writer, and made his acquaintance, if not friendship. We would chat about literature and matters of mutual interest. Then I asked him to write an introduction to my first collection of short stories (which had been aborted by martial law).

Ding agreed, but never got around to it. I was displeased, and indicated this over the phone; some words were exchanged and then I hung up.

Upset, I reported the matter to Frankie, who reprimanded me: "Why are you writers like that? You're all so sensitive, onion-skinned, etc."

I did not hear from Ding again; rather, Ding did not hear from me again until several years later when he became a managing editor (Teddy Berbano was the editor) of the Sunday supplement of the Times-Journal.

The matter or nonmatter of my *ilustrado* rudeness, and the intro that never was, was apparently forgotten; and Ding was kind enough to publish several of my articles and reviews.

Later, Ding went back to the US, and there was no further communication between us. Earlier this year, and before the official announcement, with sadness I learned about his passing away from mutual friend Pete Lacaba.

These little reminiscences have, of course, been occasioned by the recent launching of Nolledo's "Cadena de Amor and Other Stories" (UST Publishing House, 2004, 256 pages; tel. 7313522 or 4061611 loc. 8252 or 8278), with a foreword by foremost literary historian--and Nolledo's pal during UST days--Bienvenido Lumbera.

The 16 stories are arranged chronologically, and with each tale, you see Nolledo's talent unfolding, on the way to his becoming a major storyteller.

One of the early stories is "Maria Concepcion (1959). It is a dream of a tale—literally. It is the phantasmagorical story of Alfonso, wearing long pants for the first time, fantasizing about Maria, 16, a *mestiza,* and transforming her into a murderous seducer. Here we see Nolledo beginning to master his craft.

"Adios Ossimandas" is a tender, sensitive story about Clara, a young Fil-Am writer in Bloomington, USA, at the start of World War II, and the boy Ossimandas, a 19-year-old war hero who makes a profound impact on her.

With the justly famous "Rice Wine," Nolledo's ability peaked. This is a florid, melodramatic story of Santiago, who served as a courier for Aguinaldo during the Revolution and who, decades later, in a time of hunger, plunges into the dark night of his soul.

"Diwata, Where She Walked" is a melancholy, haunting tale set during the time of the boat people of Vietnam and the war in Cambodia. It follows the fortunes and misfortunes of Diwata and her son, who is half-Kampuchean. There is material here for a novel or a full-length film.

"Canticle for Dark Lovers," another famous story, is lyrical, erotic and violent. It is about the tortured relationship between the young stud-toughie De Leo, who fought as a child in WWII, and the unnamed widow who is his lover.

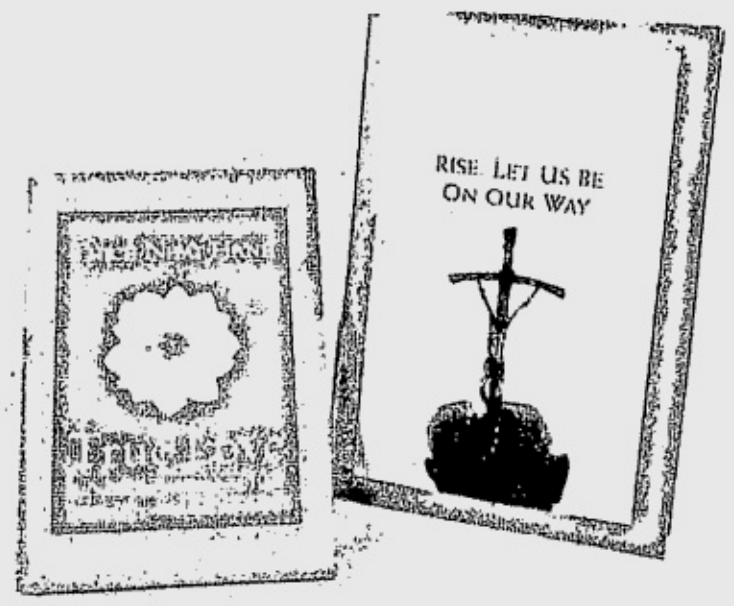
"Don't Sing Love Songs You'll Wake My Mother" tells of a wild, surrealist night on the town with the boys—reporters aching to be creative writers—replete with puns and literary allusions. It is probably semi-autobiographical.

In the title story, the main image is a garden where the dead are buried under the *cadena de amor.* It is the garden of a rural hospital where two young doctors are fighting to save the life of a lonely, elderly Spaniard with a colorful past. Completing the quartet is a young singer-hospital aide who is a Pinay Lolita.

Another tortured love story unfolds in "Amor de la Calle" between two literate young people: Terree, who has just turned 20, and Orgi, a wild young man on the road to self-destruction as he searches for a father's love.

I submit that Nolledo's reputation as a writer will rest on the novel "But for the Lovers" and these eight stories.

You may occasionally wince at the puns (and some typos) but many of these stories are bravura performances in words. This is word magic, and Nolledo is a prince of literary hype.



Holiday inspirationals

TWO truly inspirational books that can be thoughtful holiday gifts.

"True Love" by Thich Nhat Hanh teaches us how to practice awakening the heart. As it says, "training is needed in order to love properly; and to be able to give happiness and joy, you must practice deep looking toward the person you love... Understanding is the essence of love."

"Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way" by Pope John Paul II reminds us of the moment Jesus said to His closest disciples, Peter, James and John, in Gethsemane, "Rise, let us be on our way" (Mark 14:42).

This touching and inspiring book by the Holy Father reminds us that we must be willing to leave everything and to walk with God.

Available at National Book Store.

Musicat holds auditions

MUSICAT will hold auditions for Ryan Cayabyab and Noel Balmaceda's "Alikabok," and Nonoy Gallardo and Waya Gallardo's "Saranggola ni Pepe The Musical" on Dec. 16, 2-8 p.m., at 4/F MKP Room of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

"Alikabok," inspired by "La Bulaqueña," a painting by Filipino master Juan Luna now hanging in the Malacañang Palace, is the story of a turn-of-the-century Filipina *ilustrada*, Bising Vallejo, who turns her back on a comfortable life to passionately embrace the fight of the Katipunan for the country's independence.

"Saranggola ni Pepe " is about a boy who accidentally saves Saranggola Land from the clutches of King Kapre and his minions.

CRIS Villonco as Biding and Nonoy Zuniga as Don Simeon in "Alikabok"

Audition is open to male and female actors, aged 16-30, who can sing, dance and act, speak fluently in Filipino and English, and with great personality and stage presence.

Call 7231765, 7231845 and 7217229.

New book by Sylvia Mayuga

SYLVIA Mayuga's "Between the Centuries," published by the University of the Philippines Press, gathers her columns, articles, books and art reviews, most of them published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer from the '90s to the present.

This is journalism at its best, journalism in the tradition of Nick Joaquin, Kerima Polotan, Gregorio Brillantes, and Pete Lacaba; of Carmen Guerrero Nakpil and Johnny Gatbonton; of the pre-martial law Free Press, Graphic, Manila Chronicle and Manila Times—journalism as social history, journalism as literature.

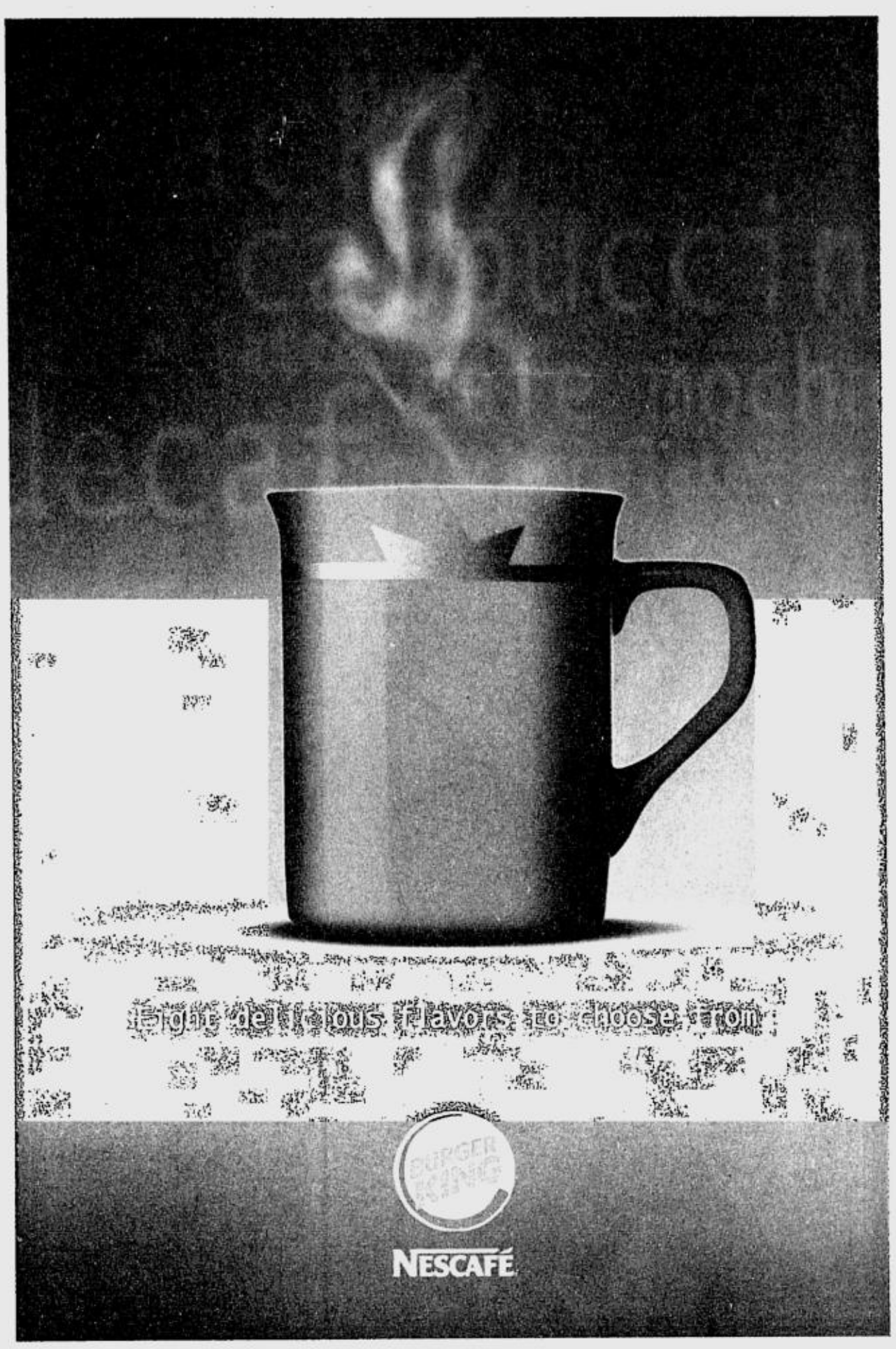
The essays in this book document the author's many causes, advocated in her inimitable style, which combines hard facts, urban legend and local lore, with language capable of clean, crisp exposition as well as of vivid, even lyrical narrative.

They discuss contemporary economic issues in a manner which will enable even dummies among her readers to make sense of them. They comment wryly on events unfolding in the global village, and in our own front yards, with imagination and insight.

They review recent books, in a manner that remind one that the best reviews are also political, social or literary commentary. Finally, they dip into the personal, sketching a grandchild, a dear friend, a departed lover, but never crossing the line into the self-indulgent or mawkish.

Says Ramon Magsaysay awardee Sheila Coronel, "Reading Sylvia Mayuga is like taking a dive into the unknown. Be prepared for surprises... The result is dazzling."

The book sells for P480 at the UP Press Bookstores in UP Diliman, UP Davao and UP Baguio, in Popular, Powerbooks, Aeon, Magnet, and most branches of National Book Store.



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In "The Princess and the Pauper," Carina, a real European princess, falls head over heels in love with a rock star she met on the Internet. Desperate to meet him, she swaps places with Julia, who happens to look exactly like her.

The two girls are soon trapped in a quagmire: Princess Carina is trapped on a seedy bus full of roadies, while Julia has to attend a royal function in a foreign land. What will happen to these posers?

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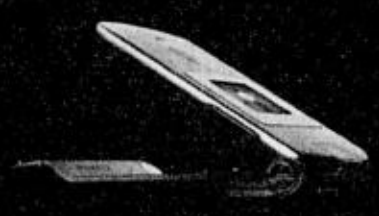

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Red Ribbon

25 YEARS

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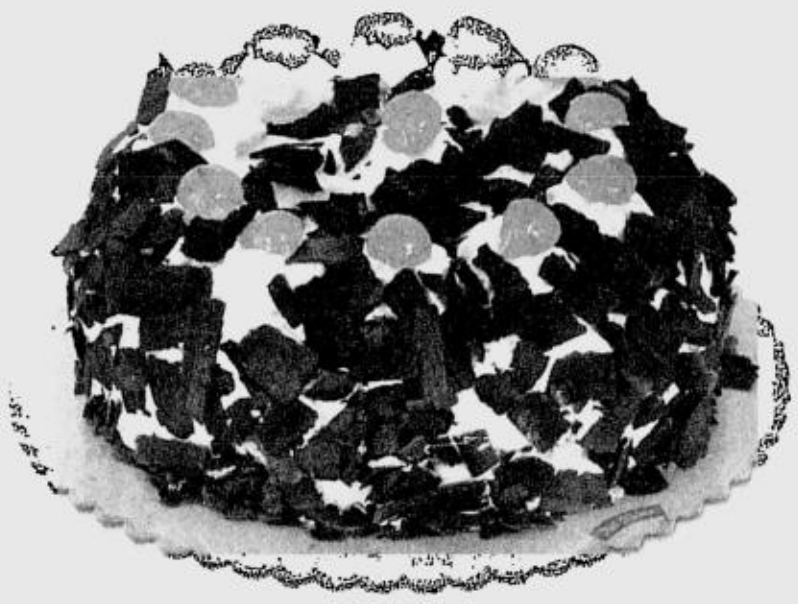


YOU GOT YOURSELF A BROWNIE

The loneliest cake in the world has kept us and Germany smiling proudly. The Black Forest Region or Der Scwarzwald located in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg evokes darkness and mystery. Like in any romantic fairy tale of epic proportions, the bleak woodlands are portrayed with Waldeinsamkeit or forest-loneliness.

Famous for its sour Morel cherries and Kirschor Kirschwasser or cherry brandy, the forest inspired the creation of a torte that has angst. (German for anguish.)

Baked with chocolate and cream, the sorrowful cake surprisingly stirs much enjoyment despite its dark origin.

Now, if you can't taste this delightful pain and bitterness, that's no Scwarzwalderkirschtortein. (Or Black Forest Cherry Torte.) That's just a regular, live-for-the-day, non-event brownie you're having. Bring home the real thing. Bring home our Black Forest and have an adventure. And discover why great cakes deserve a red ribbon.

Red Ribbon

25 YEARS OF GOOD MOOD FOOD

It all started as a little family affair. An enterprising housewife thought of selling her baked goods to friends. But the goodies turned out to be sell outs. Demand boomed as friends of the friends became converts and eventually regular patrons.

All along the frenzied baking, the husband and sons boxed the goodies and tied them with red ribbons. (They can't lay the icing but can engineer boxes out of white cartons and tie fabulous knots as well.)

So, the mystic behind the name is revealed. And the ribbon rolled on. Shortly, in 1979, the first Red Ribbon bakeshop opened at the corner of Timog Avenue. A year after, 3 more branches cropped up. Today, there are over 100 outlets all over the country and 16 in California.

And the numbers are gaining. The menu carries as many as 130 products. Not only cakes but popular snacks are included. Employee headcount started out as 7 and grew to over 2,000. Annual gross sales of 2 billion is expected to close year 2004. And numbers will add up next year as 20 more outlets happen soon.

DID WHAT? DONE THAT!

Red Ribbon Milestones

March 1979
First branch opened along Timog

April 1984
First US branch opened along West Covina, California

December 1987
First branch in SM Malls opened

June 1994
First branch in the Visayas area opened at SM Cebu

December 1996
First branch in Mindanao opened in Cagayan de Oro

October 1997
The 5th store in the US opened in San Bruno, Northern California

December 1998
The 25th store opened in Calamba

September 1999
First franchised branch opened in Bicutan

May 2001
The 10th store in the US opened in Glendale

YUBE USA!

In 1984, West Covina got its first taste of Yube (slang for ube) cake and America got hooked. It was another family affair as the missis, the hubby and dedicated relatives worked themselves to the bone hauling flour bags, kneading, mixing and icing into the night to rise up early the next day and tend store.

How did they fare? Well, the Pinoy-Ams adored the light, moist, heavenly cake delicacies which gave them a refreshing break from the heavy and sticky All-American cakes.

Carritos Branch, USA

But the Am—Ams got Yube'd too!

In no time, Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood warmed to a Red Ribbon branch. Screen icons dropped-in to break the ice of Halo-Halo and took home empanadas, mamon, taisan or chocolate cake. The Red Ribbon version became much coveted over the rich, Yank chocolate classic.

And lately...

California is now Red Ribboned. From West Covina to Sacramento. But it will be...

'YUBE USA !

In 5 years, a total of 40 branches will sprout in the East and West Coasts. Central, Vancouver, Toronto and Chicago are also included in the hit lists.

WIN WIN!

Some prestigious awards reaped along the way:

1990 : Made the covers of The Los Angeles Times Magazine

2002 : Outstanding Phil-based International Business and Most Outstanding Bakeshop (Consumer's Union of the Philippines)

2002 : Most Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year (Philippine Franchise Association)

2004 : Most Outstanding Bakeshop (Consumer's Union of the Philippines)

2004 : Finalist for Most Outstanding Filipino Franchise (Philippine Franchise Association)

S'MORE STORES

Some reasons why you'd want to be our franchisee:

We were voted as the most outstanding Filipino franchise of the year by The Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) in the Franchise Excellence Awards. This happens to be the most prestigious and only official award of distinction given by the only internationally-recognized franchise association in the country.

We have developed systems that are standards of operations committed to cleanliness and quality service. A two-month training is supplemented by an on-going consultation support.

The average payback is 5 years but some franchisees recovered investments in 2 years time.

FEEDBACK

I discovered that opening a store only required an investment of only half of what burger chains required. The revenues of my first two stores reached the same level as these burger chains. Systems and support were so efficient it only took me 3 short years to open 4 outlets with ease.

Mr. Leonard Espinosa
Franchisee since 2001

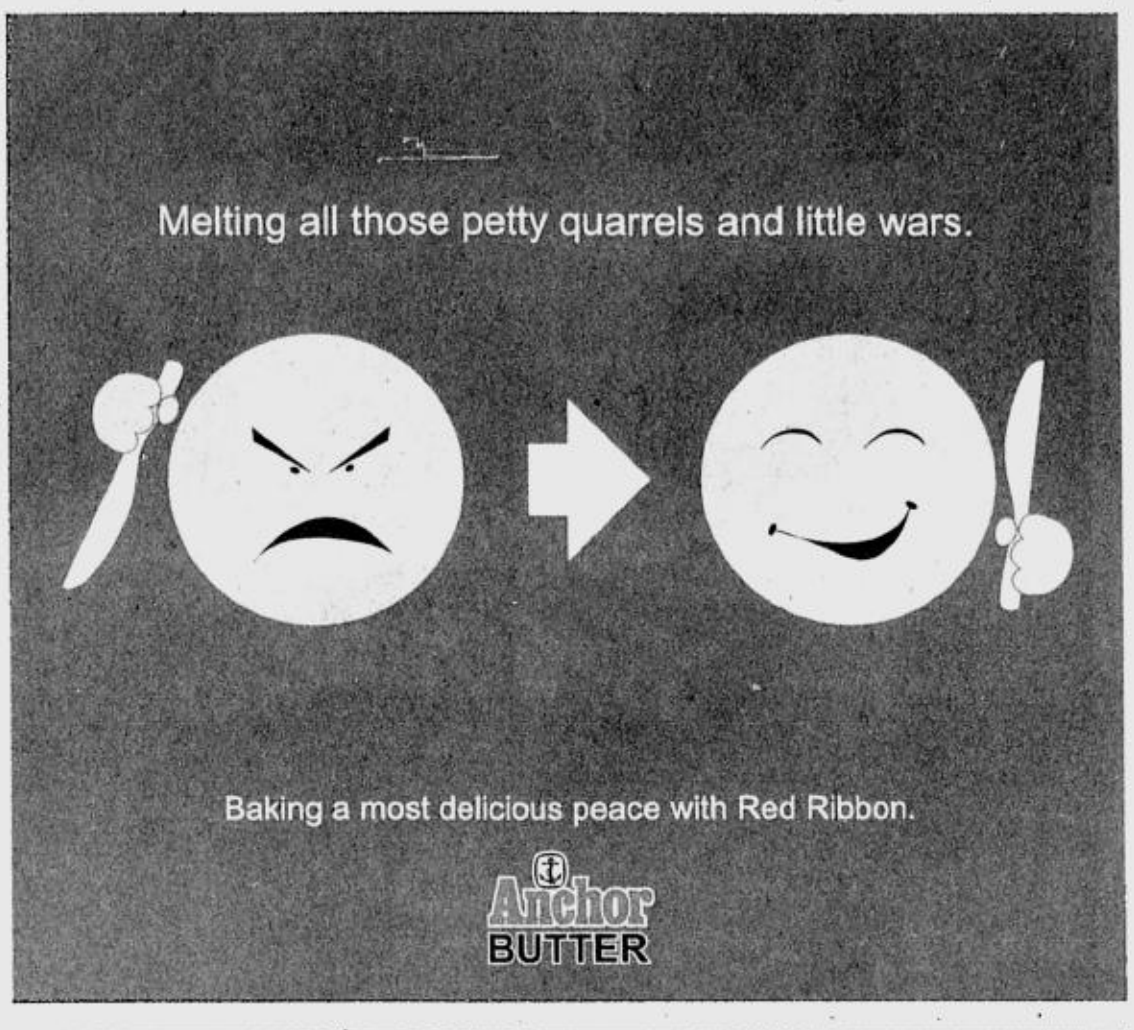
DARE TO CARE

Pusong Mamon is having a soft spot for the young Filipinos. We believe in helping them develop skills for them to land better jobs. Our mission statement, "We are a leading, growing and profitable bakeshop in the service of God and community," expresses our role of making life better not only for our employees and our consumers but also for those in need of aid.

It's a hands-on participation on the following social work projects:

- Skills development program for the deprived youth of provincial schools and centers in Punlaan, Anihan, Dualtech, Tuloy Po Sa Don Bosco Foundation, ERDA and Banilad Center in Cebu.
- We also tied up with Couples for Christ's Gawad Kalinga education program for pre-schoolers in our Red Ribbon's Abot Kamay Program (AKAP).

Through AKAP, we contribute to the learning of pre-schoolers among 14 Gawad Kalinga sites where the poorest of the poor are given a chance to break the cycle of poverty through the education and values formation of their children.



Measure the cake. Not the icing.

Baking is as exact as engineering. And the basic equation goes: flour and eggs for structure. Fat and sugar for tenderness.

Professional bakers wouldn't dream of trying to bake a cake without "doing the Math" first. Too much of the structure-building flour and eggs will make the cake tough and dry. Too much moistening fats and sugars will make it collapse.

The sugar should weigh the same as the flour. The eggs should weigh the same as the butter.

If we don't do our daily algebra and calculus of eggs, flour, sugar and all, we are not worthy to be called bakers. And if we cheat with the correct proportions, we should go to jail. Which is why our cake is not buried in icing. We painstakingly baked that cake and it's unthinkable to hide it under all that goo.

The next time you buy a cake, bring a ruler. Or bring an engineer. Or Alfred Einstien. If not, bring home our Coffee Crunch and the rest of our line up. They all measure up to the best. And you'll discover why great cakes deserve a red ribbon.

Red Ribbon

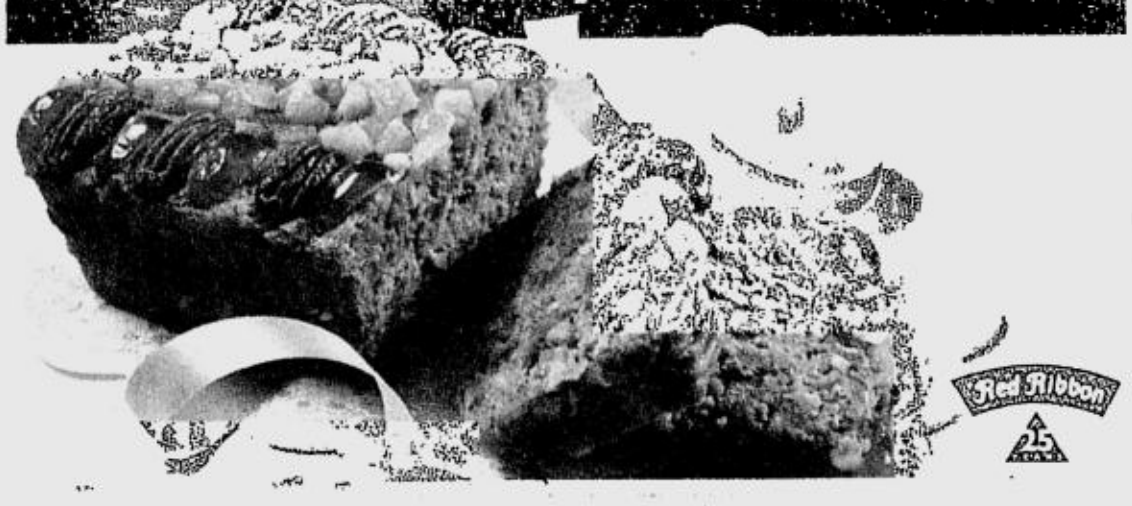
NEWS MEWS!

Our latest picks:
The Branch Crunch: You can place your order in a branch that's close to your workplace and pick it up at the branch close to your home.
Christmas Treats: Every P200 gift certificate comes with a Hallmark greeting card.
For Misa de Gallo: Selected outlets near churches open as early as 5am.

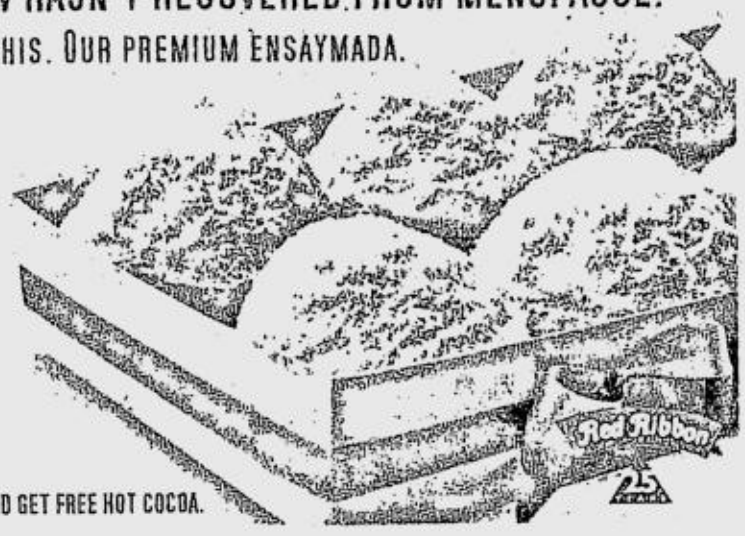
FOOT BOOT

It's football for a cause as we sponsor The Red Ribbon Football Fiesta for 8-13 year-old boys from 29 provinces nationwide. This is in tandem with the Philippine Football Federation's bid to revive youth football where Filipinos can become world champions

The only Christmas fruitcake that will never be recycled as "the gift that I don't want so I'll give it to someone I don't like".



IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE POTLUCK: YOU CAN'T COOK. AND YOUR RICH MOTHER-IN-LAW HASN'T RECOVERED FROM MENOPAUSE.
BRING THIS. OUR PREMIUM ENSAYMADA.



OH! ORDER IT FOR DINE-IN BREAKFAST AND GET FREE HOT COCOA.

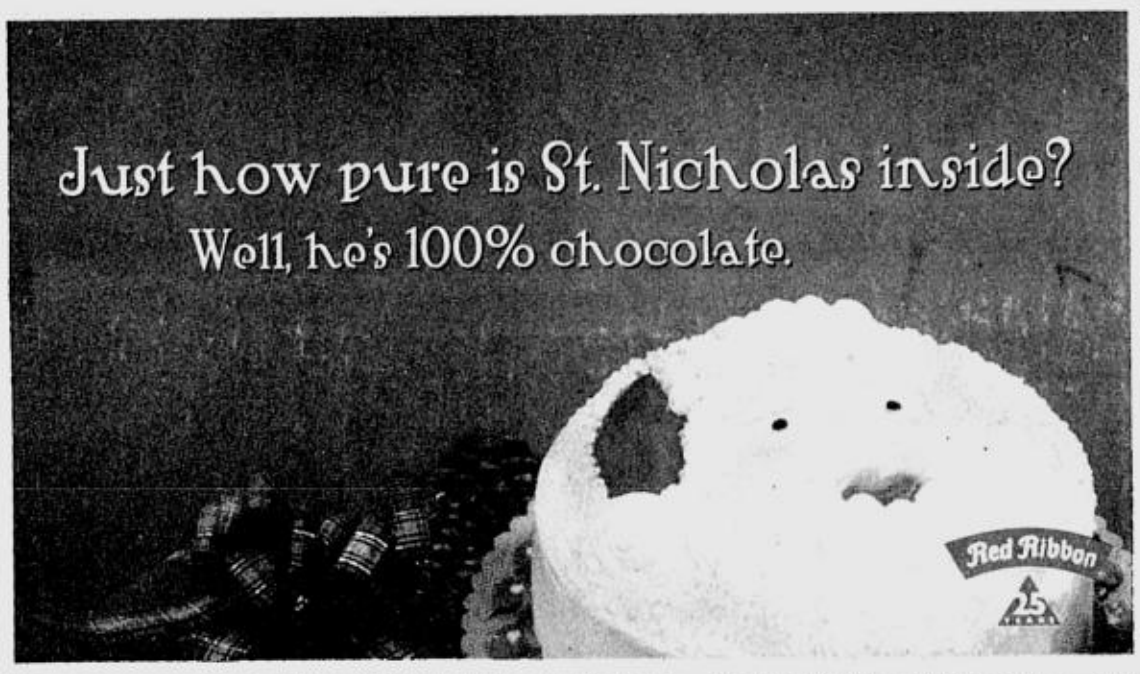
We do the cakes.
Bill Gates does the accounting.
ANSI Information Systems and Red Ribbon

NOTHING SPOILS the two of us.
Dasen Freezing Equipment Corp. and Red Ribbon

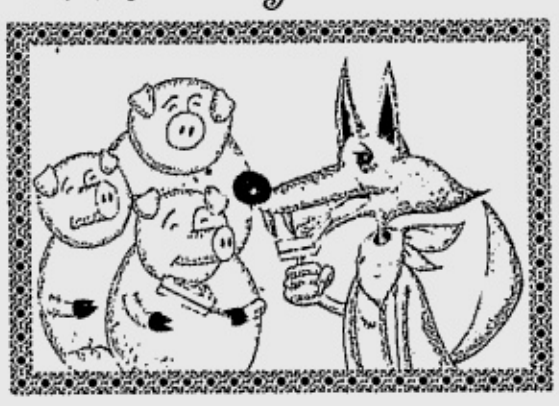
Making cakes travel.
Omnipack Industrial Corp. and Red Ribbon

Happily married to a mestisang bangus.
Anjo Farms, Inc. and Red Ribbon

Just how pure is St. Nicholas inside?
Well, he's 100% chocolate.



When you feel like huffing and puffing and hyperventilating and being manic depressive, have a slice or two.



Our Chocolate Mousse relieves stress. It also eases bitterness, soothes the nerves and increases your body's happy chemistry for brighter, more loving dispositions. Bring it home and find out why great cakes deserve a red ribbon.

Red Ribbon

MORE GOOD WILL FROM OUR PARTNERS

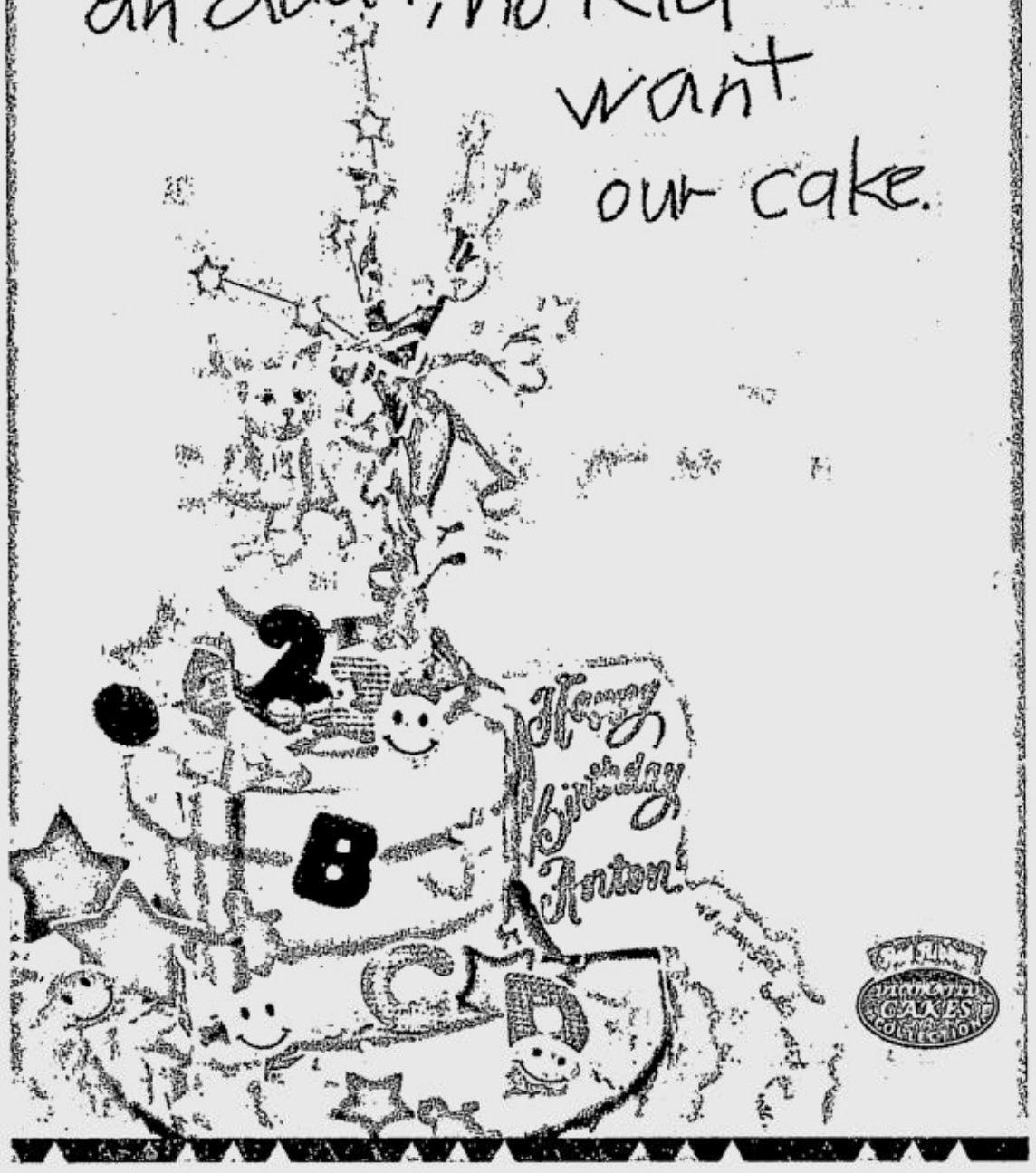
And many thanks for taking us to our 25th year.

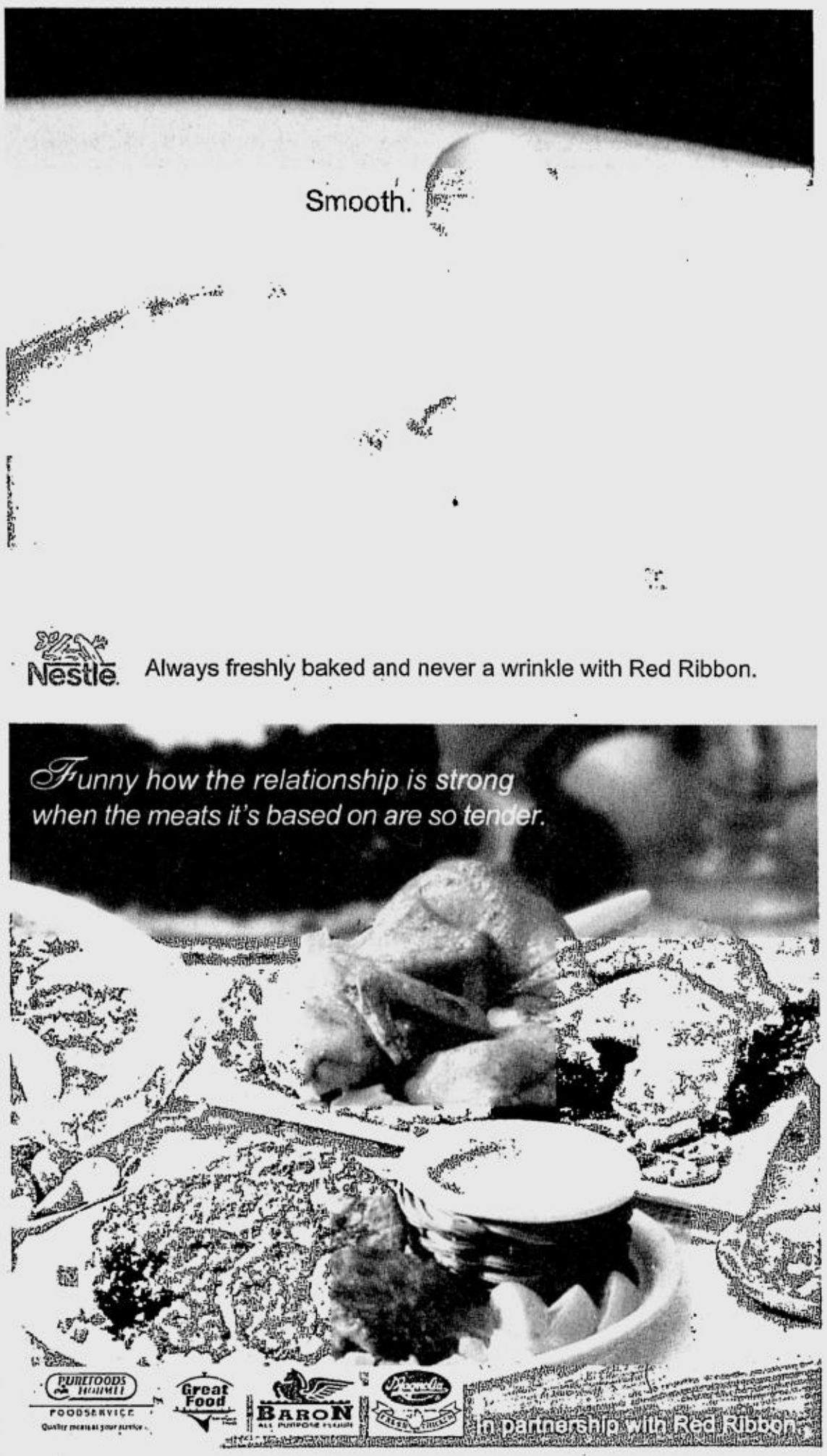
- KLG International Inc.
- Link Import- Export Enterprise Inc.
- Nan Foods Corp.
- Purechem Corp.
- Scala Printing and Packaging
- Trans World Trading Co. Inc
- Fortune Packaging Corp.
- Fajoso Construction

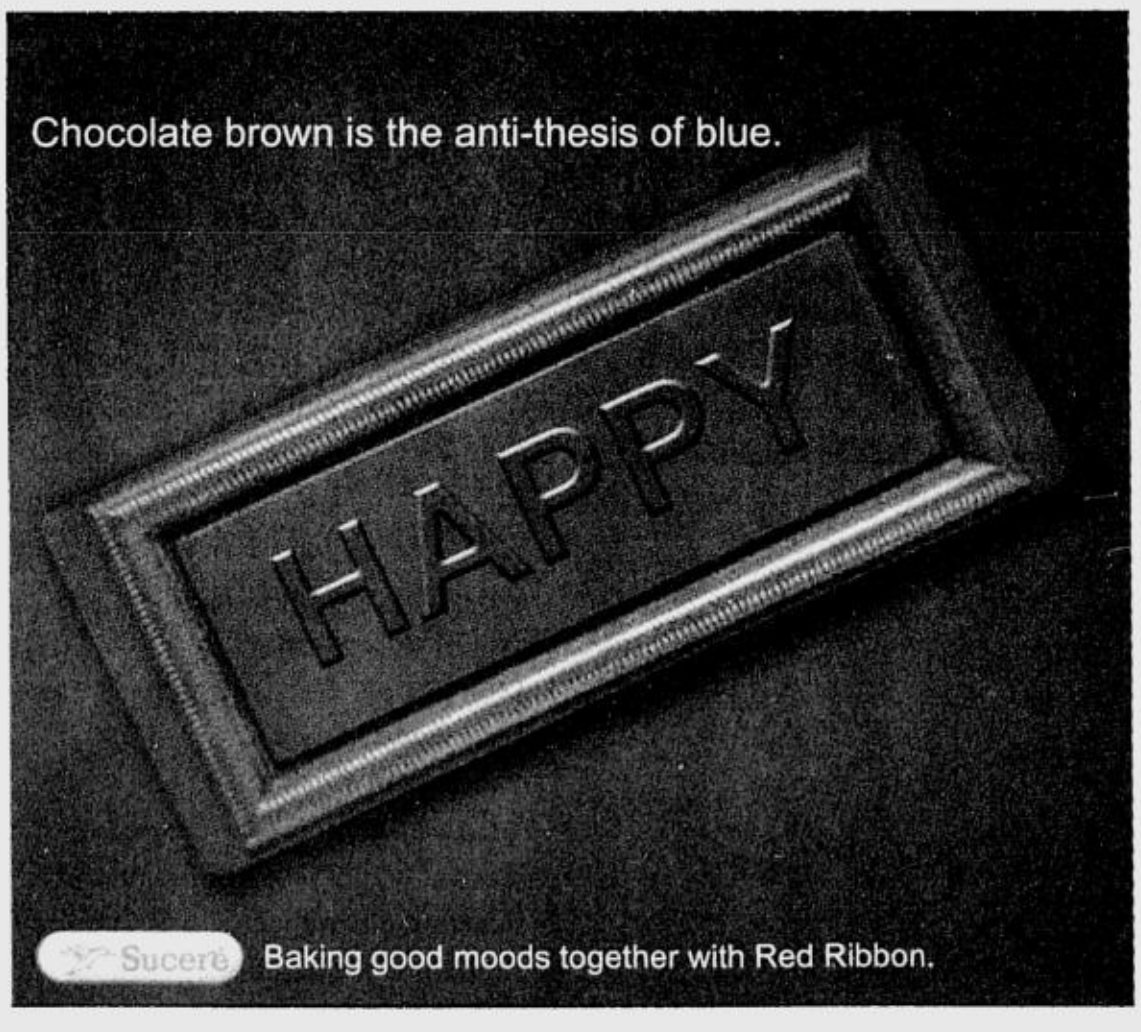
MORE WELL WISHERS!

GTGF Food Corp.
Super Dough Food and Catering Corp.
Mexico Pork
Sunlight Foods Corp.
Van Harsen Farms Corp.
Peotraco Industries Inc.
Ecolab Phils. Inc.
Nutrilicious Marketing Corp.
Cut and Plot Advertising
Fompac Plastic Corp.
Absolute Sales Corp.
Sysu International
ASCO Marketing
Del Monte Phils. Inc.
Intersource Commodities Inc.
Edward Keller Phils. Inc.
PTC Commercial Corp.
BonPack Corp.
Puratos Phils., Inc.
Tri- Excel Manufacturing Corp.
United Asia International
Styrotech Corp.
QC Styropackaging Corp.
RECPC, Inc.
Everfortune
Fabtech
Handyware
Oleo

Our birthday cake baker is such a brat. Well and good. The moment he acts like an adult, no kid will want our cake.







IDEAL Premium SPAGHETTI & MACARONI

IDEAL AUSTRALIA HARVEST OATMEAL

DAVINCI GOURMET Flavor. Above all else.

IDEAL MACARONI & SPAGHETTI FACTORY, INC.
33 Luna II Street, San Agustin, Malabon City
Tel. Nos.: 281-5967/ 2815615/ 281-8842
Fax No: 2814674 Email: info@idealmacaroni.com

17th Golden Shell Awards

Excellence in Exports

Inspiring players in the export industry

IT HAS given recognition to the most outstanding companies that did extremely well in the export industry. It never failed to take notice of organizations that made a difference and helped uplift the level of businesses in the country to compete with international counterparts.

The Golden Shell Award is considered to be the country's most celebrated export award given to homegrown enterprises.

A Filipino-owned company that has an impressive track record for five succeeding years qualifies for an Excellence Award. This is given to export manufacturers and service exporters who have displayed exceptional performance in design, manufacturing, and marketing.

While the "rookies" or new players that have made their presence felt and have innovated in design, packaging, manufacturing process, product or service development, product or service improvement, technology, or the originality in use of indigenous materials qualify for the Rising Star Citation.

On the other hand, people, projects or programs by local and international organizations and institutions that have made a significant impact on the development of the Philippine export industry is recognized through the Export Development Citation.

GSA is an initiative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), through the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem) to help motivate companies to continue their efforts in promoting Philippine-made products.

Citem has become a kind of a marketing arm of these local companies to represent in the international market. It has assisted, especially the small and medium enterprises, to participate and showcase the Philippine-made products in trade fairs, special exhibits, in-store promotions, trade missions, and other promotional activities here and abroad.

Citem also organizes local trade fairs and missions, implement industry development programs for promising export products and services, coordinate merchandise and technical assistance programs and implement other programs and activities that impact on exports.

THE 17TH GOLDEN SHELL AWARDEES
SEATED (from left): Asst. Secretary Felicitas Agoncillo-Reyes, Citem executive director; Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino, International Trade Group, chair, board of judges; Angelita M. Madulid, deputy executive director, InfoGroup, chair, GSA technical screening committee; Carlos A. Pascual, founder, Golden Cane Furniture Manufacturing Corp; Pedro H. Delantar, president, Natures Legacy Eximport Inc; Rufino M. Asi, chair of the board, Ace Apparel Associates Inc; Antonio C. Layug, president, Budji Collections; Josephine A. Booth, managing director, Mehitabel Inc. Standing (from left): Dean A. Lao Jr, operations manager, Chemrez Inc, Charlie P. Villaseñor CPM, DSM president and COO, Transprocure; Alejandro I. Alcantara, executive vice president, Alsons Aquaculture Corp; Jan Clarence V. Lim, marketing associate Multi-Link Apparel Corp; Jose Marte S. Abueg II, export trade specialist, Monde Nissin Corp; Justino R. Arboleda PhD, CEO, Juboken Enterprises; Eliseo C. Miranda, president, Foreign Buyers Association (Fobap); Michael C. Basubas, vice president, Cebu Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP); Jenifer P. Cruz, general manager, 33 Point 3 Exports Inc.; Seth H. Tugonan, chief finance officer, Raphael Legacy Designs Inc.

Inside the 'Shell': profiles of awardees

33 Point 3 Exports

Excellence in Manufacturing
Excellence in Marketing

WINNING the Golden Shell Award this year not only serves as a form of incentive for 33 Point 3 Exports. It also gives all the people behind the company some sort of satisfaction "knowing that the company has definitely stayed on the right path, and has learned from every mistake."

"This entices us to continue being true to our goal of continually coming up with high quality products," said Jenifer Cruz, general manager of 33 Point 3 Exports.

33 Point 3 Export manufactures and exports gift items, fashion accessories, and specializes in finely woven baskets better known as *hapao*. It is based in Cebu and was established in October 1990.

"We have introduced *hapao* to the export market around 6 years ago and have since been successful," Cruz said.

Cruz said the company has also recognized every member of the management, its staff, subcons, weavers and the entire workforce for their perseverance and hard work. Cruz believes that this has led to the company's gradual but surefire growth.

Ace Apparel Associates Inc.

Excellence in Manufacturing

IT IS the belief in Filipino craftsmanship, eye for details, and virtue of patience that led Ace Apparel Associates Inc (Ace) to be one of the leading children's wear exporters in the country.

Established in 1992, Ace now has two factories in Batangas and Bacolod. The company makes woven apparel and accessories for babies and children. But these are not just children's wear as it is embroidered with intricate and finest needlework, which usually come with laces. This has been the defining style of Ace products.

Allan Asi, president of Ace Apparel Associates, believes that there are no compromises or shortcuts when it comes to customer satisfaction.

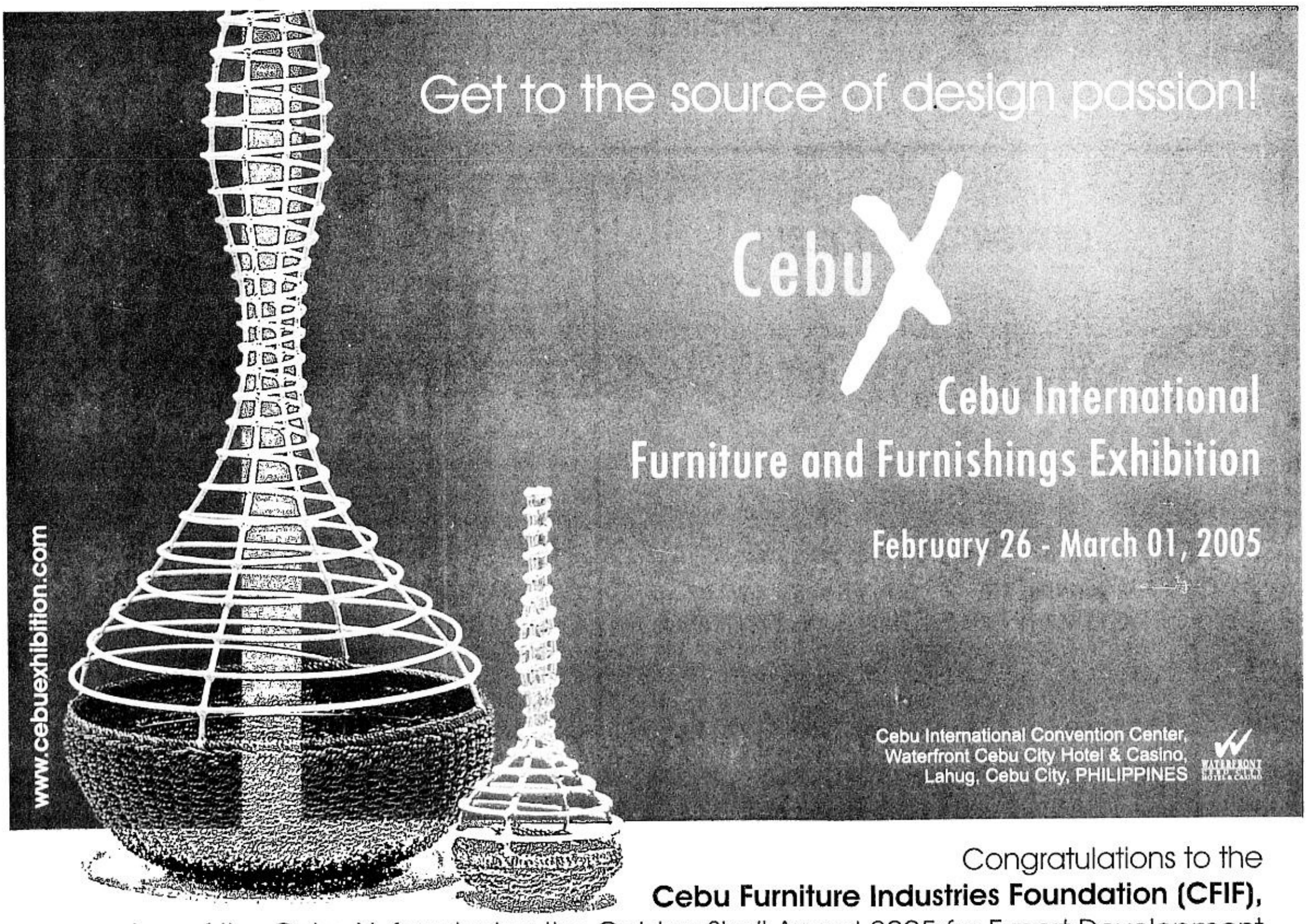
Ace has become the exclusive manufacturer of the classic Feltman. The Feltman brand has been in the American market for more than 80 years. Ace also has Friedknit Creations (New York), Mafrat (Italy), Mom's Care (Malaysia), and Green Dog (Korea) among its roster of satisfied clients.

Alsons Aquaculture

Excellence in Manufacturing
Excellence in Marketing
Excellence in Design
Presidential Citation

A PRODUCT that is consistent in quality doesn't

INSIDE/ H2



Congratulations to the
Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation (CFIF),
organizer of the Cebu X, for winning the Golden Shell Award 2005 for Export Development

Congratulation to the other winners from the Cebu Home Furnishings Industry:

Mrs. Josephine A. Booth (Mehitabel Furniture Company, Inc.) - Export Excellence
Mr. Pedro Delantar (Nature's Legacy Eximport, Inc.) - Manufacturing and Design Excellence
Mr. Jenifer Cruz (33 Point 3 Exports, Inc.) - Manufacturing and Marketing Excellence
Mr. Charles A. Belleza (Raphael Legacy Designs, Inc.) - Marketing Excellence

Inside the 'Shell': profiles of awardees

From page H1

CONGRATULATIONS

RAPHAEL LEGACY DESIGNS INC

GOLDEN SHELL AWARDEE 2005
MARKETING EXCELLENCE
GOLDEN SHELL AWARDEE 1995
DESIGN EXCELLENCE

OTHER CEBU AWARDEES

CEBU FURNITURE INDUSTRIES FOUNDATION INC
MEHITABEL FURNITURE COMPANY INC
NATURES LEGACY EXPORT INC
33 POINT 3 EXPORTS INC

FROM

WILSON GRANADOS
BIG MAO
CREATIVE CUISINE
EXPEDITORS PHILS INC
RMA CARGO LOGISTICS
YHK INT FORWARDER
RPK GLOBAL TRANSPORT
PACIFIC CONCORD
ASPAC

TÜV ISO 9001
ISO 9001 Certified

need any strategy to promote. This is the belief of Alex Alcantara, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Alsons Aquaculture Corp.

"We have a world-class product which we Filipinos can be proud of," Alcantara said.

Even faced with challenges such as stiff competition from other countries, the company never stopped in developing and improving its products which consist mainly of milkfish or *bangus*. Alsons' Sarangani Bay Brand Bangus (Milkfish) has been consistently selling in the export market.

The company operates in Alabel, Sarangani Province, and has marketing offices in Makati City, Davao City and General Santos City.

Alsons is just one of the companies under the Alcantara Group in Aquaculture which is based in Mindanao. The others are Sarangani Agricultural Company Inc., Finfish Hatcheries Inc., and Aquasur Resources Corp.

These four companies source out its goods from a 315-hectares of ponds for the grow-out of milkfish, tilapia, prawns and other fish species; 37,000 cubic meters of open sea cages for commercial fish production; 30-hectares of finfish hatchery for bangus; and a fish processing operation mainly engaged in processing of milkfish into value-added products for the local and export markets.

The Alsons Processing Plant complies with the ISO9001-2000 standards, the HACCP process systems, the SSOP and the GMP programs.

Chemrez Inc

Rising Star

CHEMREZ Inc was established in 1984, and now serves a wide variety of industries and markets. The company manufactures paint and coatings, inks, fiber-reinforced plastics adhesives, polystyrene, unsaturated polyesters, acrylic emulsions, and colorants.

Chemrez develops and processes custom-made products to meet the demands and needs of the customers. Most of their clients are involved in assembly and export of electronic office equipment and household appliances, food packaging, and wire and cable products.

In order to maintain and further improve the quality of its products, the company has an ongoing product seminars and lectures offering lessons on the basic understanding of plastics, resins and compounds in terms of product applications, technical and economical features. Advanced technical seminars for specialized applications are also conducted to update customers on the latest technology and trends in the industry.

Chemrez conducts regular visit of marketing, technical and production personnel to the customers to ensure that quality is not sacrificed.

Golden Cane Furniture Manufacturing Corp.

Excellence in Manufacturing
Excellence in Marketing
Excellence in Design

GOLDEN Cane Furniture Manufacturing Corp. was founded in 1987 by Carlos and Frocy Pascual. Its first location was in Novaliches, Quezon City. Six years later as the business grew it transferred its factory in Clarkfield, Pampanga. The years leading to 2002 saw the opening of factories in Mabalacat, and Nueva Ecija.

Carlos and Frocy Pascual filled in the other tasks to run the business. Today, they employ 6,000 workers. Golden Cane is 100-percent Filipino-owned and is exclusively in the export business. It manufactures a diverse line of furniture, home furnishing and accessories. They also produce house lighting.

Metal is the main component of the materials used for the furniture. They are mixed with rattan, and select species of vines. Frocy said that they continuously look for indigenous materials in the country which are to be used in weaving.

In 1992, only five years in the business Golden Cane was a recipient of a Golden Shell Award for Excellence in Export.

Frocy believes in the talent of Filipino designers. "They are very creative," Frocy said.

Most of Golden Cane's exports are in the United States but it also serves countries in Asia and Europe.

Frocy said that exporters must look at the total package of the export industry, "which actually has a big market share."

She also encourages them "to look at the total package of exporting. And these include social and ethical responsibility, and environmental compliance."

Juboken Enterprises

Special Citation - Rising Star

WHAT was supposed to be an environment-friendly project that would help the coconut farmers earn more turned out to be a successful business venture.

Juboken Enterprises was born out of a novel and noble idea of turning waste into something constructive and help alleviate poverty in a rural area in Bicol. But it received a cold reception from the government and the private sector. But the brains behind it could not be discouraged. Justino Arboleda, dean of the Bicol University College of Agriculture at that time sought the help of family and friends. Today, he receives a Special Citation from Golden Shell Awards as one of the Rising Stars in the export industry.

"It is perhaps this determination to succeed and the unquestioning support of my family and friends which made us succeed in the end," said Arboleda, who was also one of the pioneers of bioengineering in the Philippines.

Juboken's main products are the environment-friendly erosion control and construction materials converted from waste coconut husks. The company exports to countries like Japan and the United States. In the local shore, it has customers like Ayala Land and Fil-Estate.

Arboleda is keeping his faith that the government and the private sector will finally take notice of the potentials of the industry.

Monde Nissin Corp

Excellence in Marketing

FOR TWO decades, it has become a part of Filipinos' everyday lives. Its products are everywhere. Monde Nissin Corp started out with biscuits and eventually branched out to instant noodles.

"The award serves as a badge and reminder that the company's commitment and hard work to quality and service is acknowledged and that these efforts are not left unappreciated," said export manager Ferdinand Chanpongco. "With that said, this recognition will surely motivate the company to continue and improve our practices."

Instant Lucky Me! noodles, Nissin biscuits, cookies, crackers and wafers are few of Monde Nissin's products that have become a "staple" for consumers.

It was in its Laguna plant that saw the birth of Monde Nissin's first offering of biscuits. The year was 1980. With Nissin Butter Coconut and Nissin Wafer, Monde Nissin has become a consistent top biscuit player in the market.

Nine years later, the company introduced instant noodles with Lucky Me! Instant Mami. Its success signaled the marketing of novel and innovative products such as Lucky Me! Pancit Canton (dry noodles also in pouches), and Lucky Me! Supreme (no-cook noodles in cups/bowls), Instant Pancit Bihon and Instant Spaghetti.

From year 2000 onwards, Monde Nissin has consistently been included in the Philippines' top 100 companies.

Aside from its plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, the company set up another one in Mandaue City, Cebu.

Multi-Link Apparel Corp

Excellence in Design

"IT was hard for us to say what a company like ours, supported merely by two high-speed sewing machines and a single buyer, could become. We only had our commitment, hopes and dreams to hold on to back then," recalls Willie S. Lim It Qoun, founder and president of this year's Golden Shell Awardee for Design Excellence Multi-Link Apparel Corp (MLAC).

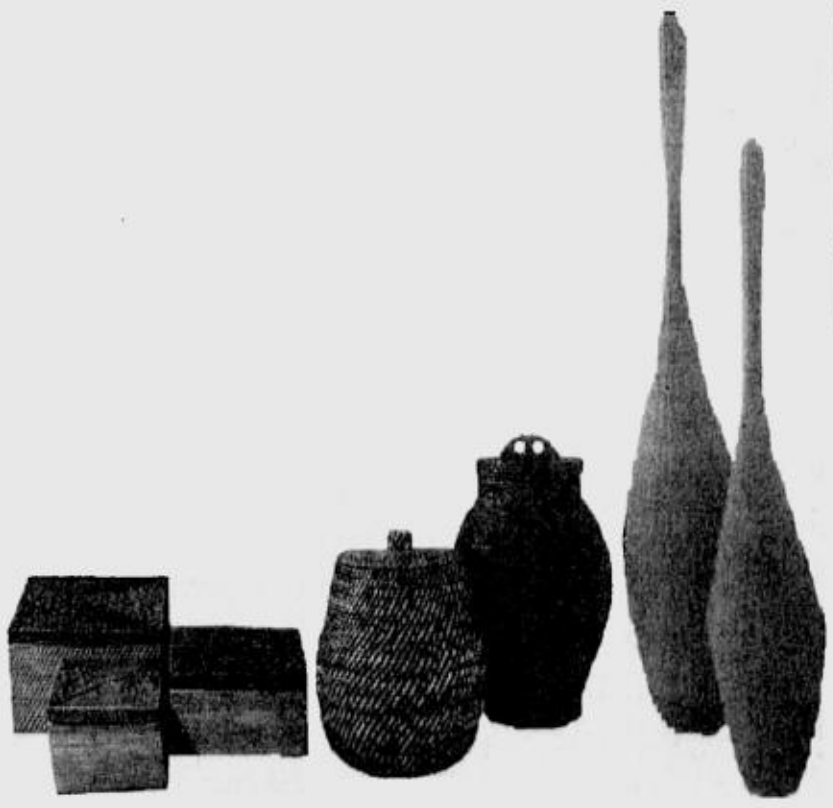
From two machines in 1990, MLAC has been able to establish sister companies St. Peter Apparel Inc in Sta. Maria, Bulacan in 1995; Blooming Apparel Corp in San Rafael, Tarlac in 1997; and Success Embroideries Inc in Mayon and Balintawak, Quezon City in 1999 —collectively churning out an average of 20,000 dozens of apparel every month and employing more than 1,000 workers. In 2001, the company also acquired Stoll multi-gauge flat-knit machines to further extend its capabilities and meet the growing demands of the market. As of this writing, MLAC has just concluded the lease for its New York liaison office by the name of Multi-Link Apparel Inc USA, the purpose of which is to establish new relationships with other US buyers and strengthen the company's existing part-

INSIDE/ H6

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

33 33POINT3 EXPORTS INC.

FOR WINNING THE 17TH GOLDEN SHELL AWARDS, EXCELLENCE IN MANUFACTURING AND EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING.



33point3 Building
M.L. Quezon St., Casuntingan
Mandaue City, Cebu
Tel. Nos. 344-8831-32
Fax No. 3440518
Email: 33point3@skyinet.net
Website: www.33point3.com

MULTI-LINK APPAREL CORPORATION

(JCPenney Outstanding Partnership Awardee 2002. Kids 'R' Us Best Vendor Awardee 2002. JCPenney Operational Excellence Awardee 2003. Golden Shell Awardee for Design Excellence 2004.)

is in need of:

- Garment Export Merchandiser*
- Graphic Designer*
- Patternmaker
- Accountant
- Computer Programmer

**preferably with at least 3 yrs. experience in garment export*

If interested, pls. fax your resume to Norma Adriano at 3613775 and call 3638878-82 for an interview schedule.

Come grow with us.

FURNITURE HOME FURNISHING HOUSEWARE ACCESSORIES

Golden Cane

FURNITURE MANUFATURING CORP.

2004 GOLDEN SHELL AWARDS PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

The Highest Award for Excellence in Exports

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

2001 FINALIST - BEST EXHIBIT AWARD
INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR SINGAPORE

2001 FIRST RUNNER-UP VISUAL MERCHANDISING
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE SHOW

1999 NOMINEE BEST IN VISUAL MERCHANDISING
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE SHOW

1997 OUTSTANDING EXPORT CLIENT
PHIL. EXPORT AND FOREIGN GUARANTEE
LOAN CORP. (PHIL GUARANTEE)

1996 GAWAD KABISIG AWARDEE
OUTSTANDING KABISIG TYPE PROJECT FOR A
FURNITURE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

1996 KATHA WINNER BEST PRODUCT DESIGN / BEST BOOTH DESIGN
MANILA F.A.M.E. INTERNATIONAL (HOUSEWARE / GIFTWARE)

1995 KATHA AWARDEE FOR MOST PROMISING DESIGNER
MANILA F.A.M.E. INTERNATIONAL (HOUSEWARE / GIFTWARE)

1993 KATHA AWARDEE FOR BEST PRODUCT COLLECTION
MANILA F.A.M.E. INTERNATIONAL (HOUSEWARE / GIFTWARE)

1992 GOLDEN SHELL AWARDEE FOR EXCELLENCE IN EXPORT

1991 WINNER - SINGAPORE FURNITURE DESIGN COMPETITION

1991 KATHA AWARDEE FOR BEST PRODUCT COLLECTION
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE SHOW

FOUNDERS

MR. CARLOS A. PASCUAL
MS. FROCY G. PASCUAL

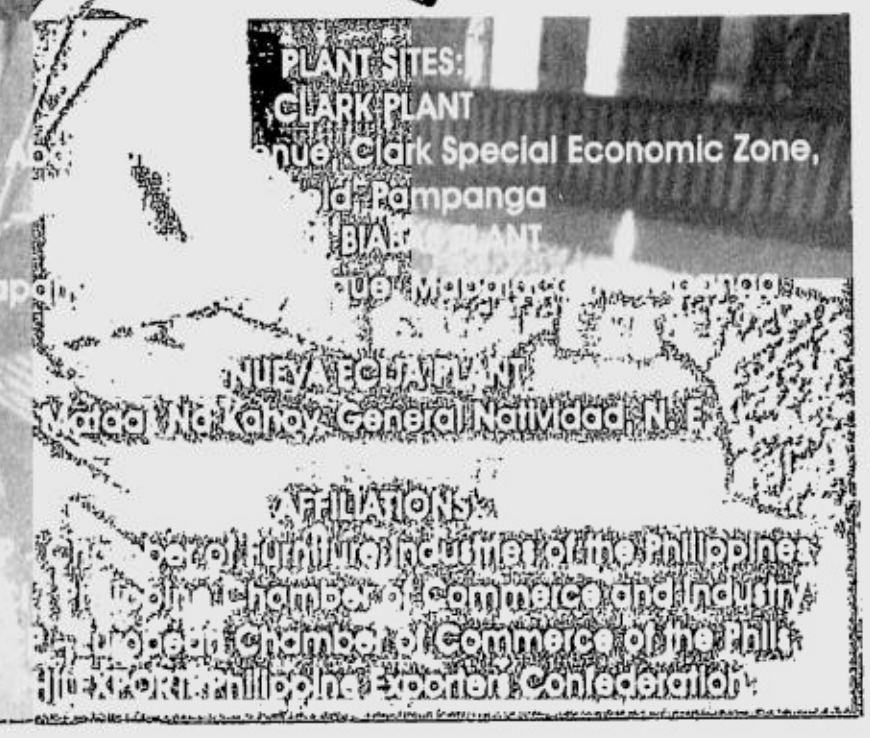
MS. FROCY G. PASCUAL
PRESIDENT

PRODUCTS
FURNITURE (Dining, Living, and Bedroom Collections)
HOME FURNISHINGS, HOUSEWARES & ACCESSORIES
(Baskets, Candleholders, Lamps, Planters, Hampers, Wine, Magazine Racks, Umbrella caddies, Trays, Vases, Office table accessories)

Combination of Materials: Metal, Rattan, Split, Wicker, Wood, Leather, Bamboo, Havana, Nito, Abaca

TOTAL CAPACITY:
250 X 40' FOOT CONTAINER VANS PER MONTH

SHOWROOM : PAMPANGA
Jose Abad Santos Avenue, Clark Special Economic Zone, Clarkfield, Pampanga
Tel. Nos. (63-45) 599-2057 / 599-2023 Fax No. (63-45) 599-2024



CONGRATULATIONS!

from: Isla Filipina International, Inc.

For HOME FURNISHINGS & ACCESSORIES
No. 33 Kalayaan Avenue, Q.C., Philippines
Tel. No. +63 2 925-1495
Fax No.+63 2 922-1504
CONTACT PERSON
FROCY G. PASCUAL - PRESIDENT

- Interior/refurnbishing jobs for hotels and restaurants
- Catering and concessioning
  Exclusive and official concessionaire of the Senate of the Philippines
  (2003 and 2004 Senator's Lounge and Senate Canteen)
- Events, Functions Rooms
- Sale/Rental of exclusive chairs

"We save trees for the future"

Priceless 'pearls' in 'golden shells'

Josephine A. Booth

Managing Director, Mehitabel Inc.

Export Development Citation

SHE has carried on the legacy of her mother in the rattan furniture business, but Josephine A. Booth also stepped out of her shadow to make a difference in her own way.

Booth is the daughter of Doña Maria Montenegro de Aboitiz who formed Mehitabel Furniture Company with a US Army Major at the end of World War II. Soon after, the American partner returned to the United States. John McGuire who was then a young executive in an oil company took notice of the potential of the business to make it to the world market.

For the past 34 years of Mehitabel's 56 years of existence, Booth not only involved herself in the business but also helped the industry fight its battles and emerge victorious.

Booth was one of the first few members of the Cebu Furniture Industries Philippines (CFIP) when it was organized around 1972 to represent the handful of rattan and *buri*

PRICELESS/H5

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A YGC Member

Nature's Legacy®
Natures Legacy Eximport, Inc.
Compostela, Cebu

Mama Sita's
"Panahon na para tangkilikin ang sariling atin."
Teresita "Mama Sita" Reyes
FRIED TOFU with Oyster Sauce

For EVERYDAY Dishes
Kay Sarap ng Mama Sita's Oyster Sauce

FRIED TOFU with OYSTER SAUCE
Makes 4 servings

Ingredients
4 tbsps cooking oil
5 pcs tofu cut into 1/2" x 1/2" cubes
(Optional) 1 cup bottom mushrooms, fresh or canned, quartered
3 tbsps Mama Sita's Oyster Sauce
1/8 tsp black pepper, ground
1/4 cup spring onions, cut into 1/2" lengths

Cooking Directions
1. Heat oil in a pan and fry the tofu until golden brown. Drain and set aside.
2. In the same pan, stir fry the mushrooms for about 3-5 minutes
3. Add Mama Sita's Oyster Sauce, fried tofu and black pepper. Mix well and cook for another 2 minutes.
4. Add the spring onions and stir. Serve hot.

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Manufactured by Chemrez Inc., a subsidiary of D&L Industries Inc.

Priceless 'pearls' in 'golden shells'

From page H4

factories, and small wood workshops in the region.

In 1984 Mehitabel was a recipient of the Golden Shell Award.

Booth acted promptly when the export of rattan furniture was threatened by the continuous export of rattan poles that was controlled by pole exporters in 1974. Together with Manila CFIP, she lobbied with government for the ban of the export of rattan poles. It was in 1976, two years after, the ban was approved and imposed.

Booth was also one of the people who organized the Save Cebu Crusade, a movement that included various trade chambers to counter the restive labor sector.

Mehitabel joined local and international trade fairs to ensure the sustainability of exports. Its products are exported to countries in Asia, Australia, Europe, South America, and the United States. The company has loyal customers that span 12 to 55 years of cultivating business relationships.

Antonio 'Budji' C. Layug

President and Designer
Budji Collections
Export Development Citation

COMING from a family of furniture makers, it is no surprise that Antonio "Budji" C. Layug would excel and make a name for himself and would become a major figure in the local and international scene.

He studied at the New York School of Interior Design, and also enrolled in architecture at the University of Sto. Tomas. His thirst for understanding the foreign culture, art and design brought him to different parts of the world.

It was during a day in the beach sometime in the 1970s that sparked his interest in furniture design. The anecdote is that Budji was deeply impressed by the skills of two men building a traditional bamboo outrigger canoe. He noticed their use of native materials. From then on, Budji began to design furniture that incorporated traditional techniques and indigenous organic materials such as *pandan*, bamboo and Philippine hardwoods to create sleek, elegant and thoroughly post-colonial furniture.

Since 1975, the works of Budji can be found in hotels, offices, and residences worldwide. Budji's designs epitomize his personal philosophy of maintaining a balance between grace, elegance, simplicity, and nurturing their environment.

The Budji Collections Inc manufactures elegant, contemporary furniture—all crafted by hand using the weaving techniques in the country.

Budji's unquestionable fame reached other shores worldwide. He was featured on "Style with Elsa Klensch" in December 1997, and in various magazines like the Architectural Digest, Hospitality Design Magazine, Design Times, Veranda Magazine, Interior Design Magazine.

He has showrooms in Europe, North America, Asia, and the United States.

Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation Inc

Export Development Citation

AN EXCELLENT product without the proper venue for buyers to see and acquire is tantamount to nothing.

A dilemma long been resolved by the Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation Inc. (CFIF) by way of becoming an efficient marketing arm that brought the Philippine furniture and furnishing industry to exhibitions here and abroad, springing forth a porthole for the furniture business to excel in the foreign market.

PIFS-Cebu was very successful that companies from Manila, Negros, Pampanga, Mindanao and all over the Philippines found their way into the show in the following years. With its initial 35 exhibitors, it now has over a hundred exhibiting companies from around the country. Since 2002 CFIF has solely organized the Cebu show and renamed it into a much simpler, but definitely esteemed "Cebu X."

Through the years, CFIF has undoubtedly grown dramatically into a respected voice in the furniture industry. Organizers of international furniture shows such as the Internationale Mobel Messe, Koln, Maison et Object, International Furniture Fair Singapore, Furniture China in Shanghai, and Salon du Meuble de Paris offered invitations to CFIF to bring a delegation to their shows. So far, CFIF has organized international group participation to the Furniture China in Shanghai in 2003 and 2004, and to the Tokyo Furniture Show in 2002.

Aside from exhibitions, CFIF through Cebu X has also initiated trade missions, market study missions, and product development and design training for export development. These programs were targeted at expanding the markets of the show's exhibitors through effective promotions, productivity improvement programs and marketing programs.

Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines

Export Development Citation

AT THE height of the Asian financial crisis when most commercial banks slammed their doors on small and medium-sized exporters, an unconventional, collateral-free lending project was born.

The Transactional Financial Facility, an initiative of the Philippine Exporters Confederation (Philexport), Land Bank of the Philippines and the Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines (Fobap), helped exporting SMEs survive the credit crunch. The second memorandum of agreement between Philippine Exporters Confederation, Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp (SBGFC) and the Foreign Buyers Association followed and SBGFC has been more active than Land Bank. Fobap spearheaded the implementation of a monitoring scheme that minimized the risks for both the lender and the lendee from default and kept risks of non-payments to a minimum.

The project proved to be a resounding success with a 99-percent repayment record after the lending of P302 million covering 254 transactions that involved 60 exporters from Manila and nearby provinces since 1999.

Fobap's close relationship with buyers and suppliers, as well as the lending institutions, has surpassed the traditional credit line investigations of banks because it is based on knowing paying capabilities and practices of buyers, as well as lifestyle and business practices of exporting companies.

The Export Development Citation is given to the "Monitoring Scheme" implemented in the Transactional Financial Facility by the Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines, for providing the impetus in developing credit worthiness of unbankable SME exporters, by integrating finance monitoring in their regular functions, thus proving valuable linkage between financial institutions and growing export manufacturers.

Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines

A celebration of 27 years of service to Philippine exports Representing Buyers worldwide, conduit on information networking on market conditions and trends, advocacy to both government & non-government agencies towards globally competitive response to market needs.

FOBAP has an annual export performance of US$1·Billion

FOREIGN BUYERS ASSOCIATION FOBAP OF THE PHILIPPINES

FOBAP Integrated Development Foundation, Inc.

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Financial Institutions and Exporters index in achieving credibility and reliability
Non-government source of effective and reliable export services for exporters

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E-mail fbap@edsamail.com.ph

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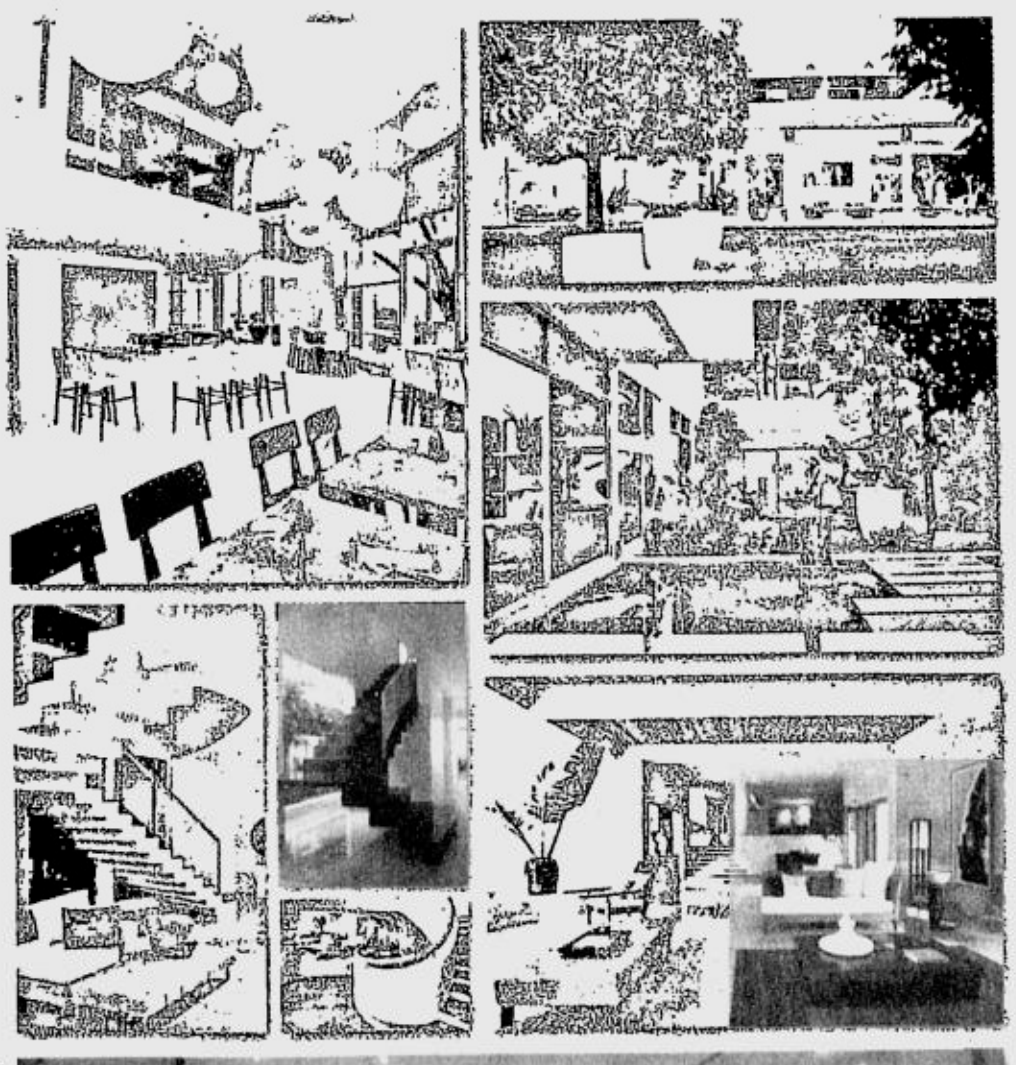

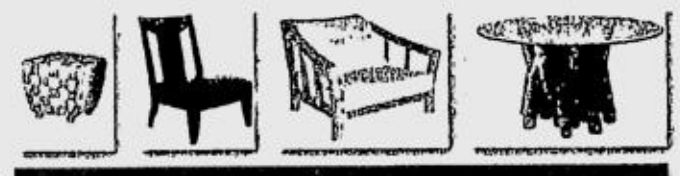

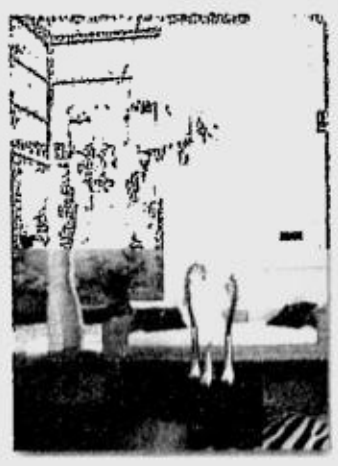

Inside the 'Shell': profiles of awardees

From page H2

nerships, while creating and building a brand of its own.

"I am proud to say that MLAC is not one to give up easily," Lim says.

Natures Legacy

Excellence in Manufacturing
Excellence in Design

AMONG other businesses in the export market, the furnishings and furniture industry is one of the most progressive. It can be attributed to the Filipinos innate talent in design; or perhaps in the simple belief that the Philippines has a lot of potential.

Natures Legacy Eximport Inc. has established a wide customer base all over the world. Its two Golden Shell Awards this year could motivate others to do beyond what is given and available, according to Pete Delantar, CEO of Natures Legacy.

Natures Legacy is a manufacturer and exporter of home furnishing, accessories, furniture and garden articles for indoor and outdoor use serving customers in parts of Asia, Europe, Mediterranean, Middle East, and the United States. It is based in Compostela, Cebu.

"The award means recognition of our hard work and perseverance to attain excellence," Delantar said.

"Competition can be good and bad to anybody but if one knows how to turn it into an advantage, it is a powerful tool," he said.

To do this, Natures Legacy regularly participates in major international trade fairs in Europe, Hong Kong, the United States, and the Philippines. Aside from it, the company continuously innovates its products spearheaded by its research and development department. It acquires new technology and equipment to meet the demands and quality standards of its products.

Delantar has this advice to help promote the Philippine-made products not only to overseas market but to the Filipinos too. "Know the market first—their need, lifestyle and preference—and develop a product which suits the needs."

Raphael Legacy Designs Inc.

Excellence in Marketing

FOR RAPHAEL Legacy Designs, competition is important that companies develop products which are "novel or even patented in order to create a separate demand for its own products."

Raphael Legacy exports furniture and it launches a new collection twice a year. These collections are exhibited in the market during international fairs in Cebu and Manila.

The company is also involved in environmental protection and conservation. Some recyclable materials are reused in the production process.

Raphael Legacy also believes that personal friendship with buyers develop. Understanding the target market of its clients would best result in closer cooperation and understanding.

Most importantly, it believes in maintaining product quality and continuous suggestion on product development.

TransProcure Corp

Rising Star

TRANSPROCURE Corp's winning this year's Golden Shell award confirms that the company can give procurement a good name. This recognition further places TransProcure in a unique position of helping companies of various sizes and industries, both local and international, to be cost competitive by lowering the barriers of adapting efficient procurement through its domain expertise, experience, processes and technology enablers.

TransProcure provides global procurement solutions and services. Its core offering includes procurement consulting and studies, strategic sourcing, low-cost country sourcing, eProcurement implementations, outsource transactional and tactical procurement work, private and public procurement training, logistics services, offshore procurement helpdesk support, procurement staffing and executive search among its services.

Charlie Villaseñor, president and CEO of TransProcure, considers the award as positioning the company to make the Philippines the "Procurement Capital of the World". He mentioned about the Philippine's success in providing BPO services such as in call centers, IT, accounting and human resources operations. Purchasing is going to be the next page on these successes and certainly, we are getting it.

TransProcure is also the first company to offer a completely end to end procurement solution and services that includes strategic and transactional procurement and global sourcing that are fully e-enabled by best of breed procurement technology.

Congratulations, TransProcure for winning the 'Rising Star' award!

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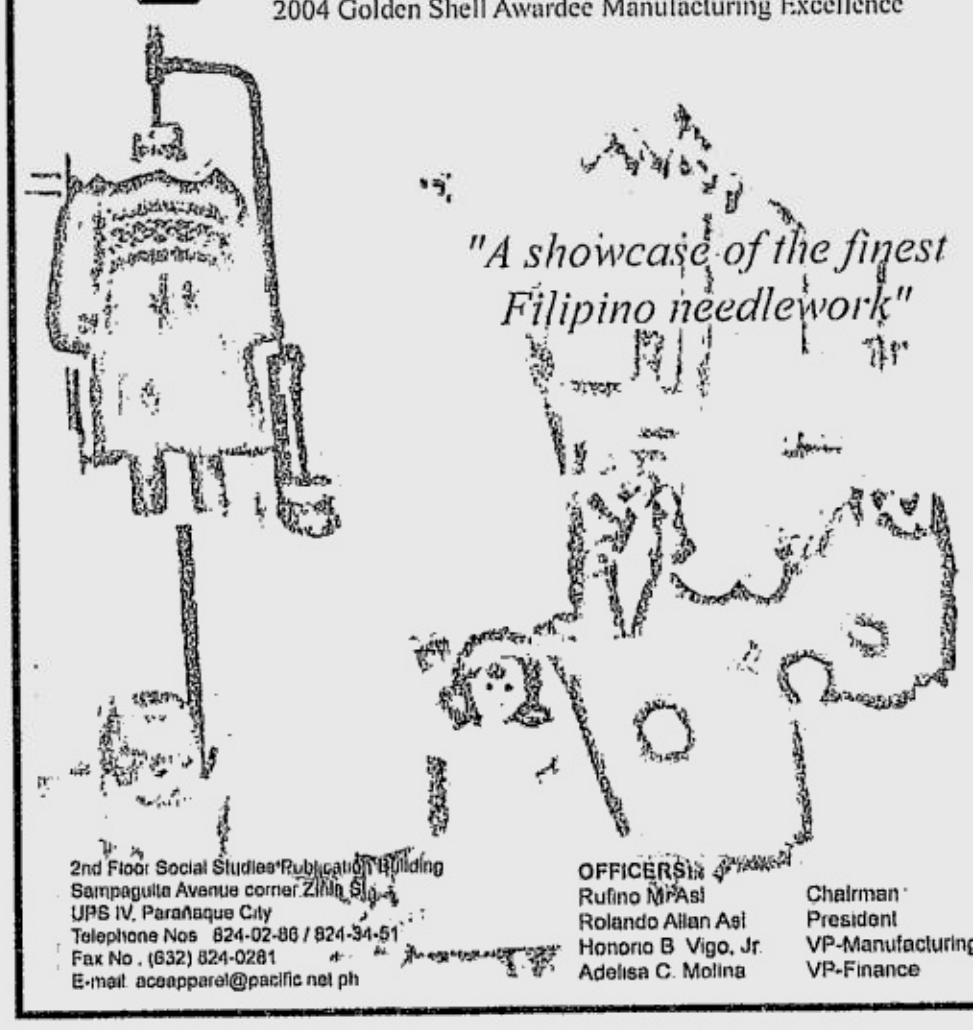

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Melatonin may help cope with depression

DEPRESSION is a mental illness characterized by sadness, general apathy, loss of self-esteem, guilt feelings, and suicidal tendencies. It is a mental disorder that involves mood, body and thoughts. Symptoms and severity of depression may differ from one person to another. In worst cases, serious depression may result in suicide.

Although treatment can lessen depression by 80 percent, yet its symptoms are usually unrecognized, leading to serious consequences including suicide. Medical experts agree that psychotherapy and antidepressants are the basic remedies for depression. Although, these remedies are already proven, there are also natural substances like Melatonin (a hormone produced by the pineal gland in the brain), which helps people cope with depression. Based on a small double blind study, supplementation of small amounts of melatonin may reduce depression.

Melatonin also plays a vital role in sleep facilitation. Since patients with major depressive disorders experience sleep disturbances, this hormone solves such kind of disorder. Melatonin notably shortens the time needed to go to sleep, reduce the number of night awakenings, and improves sleep quality (these symptoms are prevalent among people with depressive disorders).

Melatonin also has been reported to help enhance the sexual function and reproduction, boost the immune system, protect against cancer and keeps the cardiovascular system healthy.

Available as Melatonin-T, an over-the-counter product in Mercury and Watson drugstores, it comes in 3mg capsules and the recommended dosage is 1 to 2 capsules daily after supper or near bedtime. It is locally distributed by Trianon International Inc. For further information about Melatonin-T and for interested provincial distributors, call 815-3239 during office hours.

Abenson's 4 raffles, great giveaways, 0% interest

TRUE to Holiday traditions, Abenson celebrates Christmas with loads of fun! This year, more than ever, Abenson has cooked up raffle promotions, freebies and easy installment plan to make appliance shopping hassle free for everyone! Shoppers can enjoy all these this Christmas!

First, get a chance to join the Grand Holiday Raffle where you can win a Mitsubishi Adventure or one of 100 great appliances you have always dreamt of. Customers who buy a minimum of P1000 can join Abenson's 100 Days of Christmas raffle promo.

Second, Use your BPI Express Credit Classic (Burgundy) card at Abenson to enjoy Double Frequent User Points. Plus, get a chance to win a Volvo luxury car or an P800,000 lifestyle package in the raffle promo.

Or also use your Citibank credit card at Abenson to avail yourself of valued perks. Enjoy 0 percent on all items exclusive to Citibank cardholders and double your chances of winning in the Citibank Preferred brands raffle promotion. Every P1000 PayLite purchase entitles you to a raffle entry. However, when you shop at Abenson, you automatically earn two raffle entries for every P1000 purchase. In Citibank's raffle, great prizes are at stake: a Mercedes-Benz C180, Fujitsu Lifebook, Sony Projection TV, trip for two to Hong Kong, P100,000 worth of Shell Fuel and a lots more. Plus, in the grand draw, one lucky Citibank cardholder gets to win all 10 prizes!

Fourth, when you use your Visa card you get to join Visa's raffle promo where you get a chance to win back your 2004 Visa purchases. Be a lucky winner when you shop at any Abenson store.

Stakes are high with all four raffles, but to make the season truly bright, Abenson gives you a Christmas gift pack on a wide selection of appliances. Enjoy this year's Christmas dinner with pasta and dessert. Plus, enjoy easy payment terms with Abenson's 0 percent interest installment. Video cameras, digicams, and TV sets can be yours on easy monthly installments of up to 12 months. Moms can get kitchen partners-refs, microwave ovens, gas ranges-on interest free installment too.

Infanta book generates donations for flood victims

A BOOK on Infanta published by BPI Foundation, in cooperation with the Doña Isabel Garcia y Fernandez Trust fund is generating donations to the victims of the series of typhoons that killed hundreds and caused widespread destruction to homes, farms, schools, roads and bridges in Infanta and the neighboring towns of Real and Gen. Nakar in northern Quezon.

NOEL Cabangon sings for Infanta during BPI Foundation's call for donations

Proceeds of the book, now being rushed by the Print Town Group for delivery in the next few weeks, will all go to the flood victims through the office of Fr. Francis Lucas, former Infanta parish priest and current president of the Infanta Integrated Community Development Assistance Inc (Icdai), and head of the Catholic Media Network (CMN).

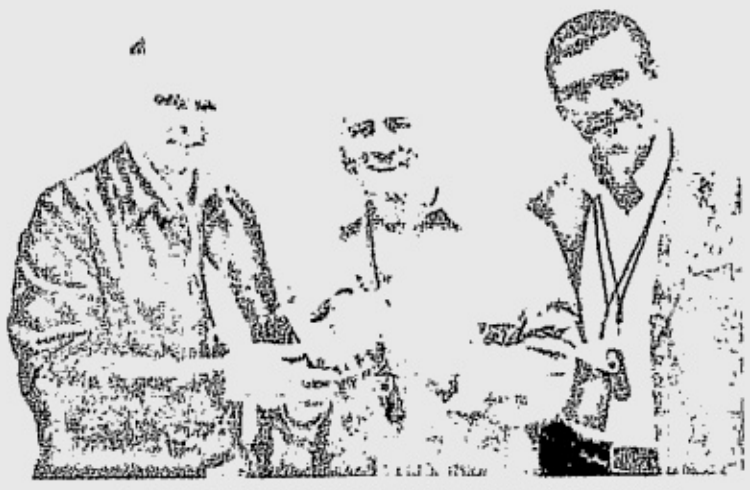
Anybody interested to help the flood victims of Infanta will be entitled to copies of the book in consideration for their donations. The donations, however, have to be given now since the relief goods have to reach the victims at once. A comparative cost of the book would be at least P3,000 per copy. Donors who can afford less than this amount can combine with other donors for them to get one copy, or they can simply donate through the same channel.

"Infanta is still inaccessible for most relief donations and people are still dying, getting sick or suffering from the trauma of being exposed for several days and nights to the rains and floods," Fr. Lucas said. "The food, medicine and other relief goods going to Infanta are still coming in trickles as it is at the end of that long and impassable road that goes to Real and Nakar."

"Most of the things we have worked on and built for many years, such as the cooperative school, radio station, the church and training center, have been heavily damaged, their equipment and facilities now beyond repair. I am getting all kinds of text messages telling of tragedies. The people who are still living but have lost their children or parents are asking me what they will do with their lives. We are appealing for help," he said.

BPI Foundation executive director Veronica Tapia-Merk said the Bank of the Philippine Islands already made a corporate donation, but the present situation requires additional resources. She appealed to all sectors to course their donations either directly to Fr. Lucas at the CMN office, 2307 Pedro Gil Street, Sta. Ana, Manila with telephone numbers 563-7321, 563-7313 or through BPI Foundation, 5th floor, BPI main building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati. For inquiries, call the BPI Foundation representative at 816-9288, 816-9436, 816-9390, 845-5533 and 816-9116.

For those who wish to donate in cash, deposit your donations to BPI savings account 0013-6098-61, account name BPI Foundation Inc. Fax your deposit slip at 845-5409 (corporate communications/BPI Foundation Inc). For in kind donations, bring these priority items to the CMN office: Food-bottled water, rice/noodles, biscuits, canned goods, oil, water purifying tablets, baby food/milk; Medicines/medical supplies-paracetamol, cough and cold medicines, Hydrite/Pedialite/Oresol packets, decongestants, mucolytic/expectorant, antibiotics (amoxicillin, coltrimoxazole, cloxacillin), Cefelexin, multivitamins, antibacterial skin ointment, Betadine, gauze, thermometers, warm compress, cold compress, hot water bag, ice bag; and Basic Household Needs-soap, mosquito nets, blankets, water container (jerry cans), flashlights and batteries, and cooking utensils (pots and pans).



PHILIPS TECH FEATURED IN 'OCEAN'S TWELVE'

Royal Philips Electronics of the Netherlands, Europe's number one electronics company, is the official consumer electronics technology supplier to Warner Brothers Pictures and Village Roadshow Pictures' production of 'Ocean's Twelve', the sequel to the 2001 blockbuster movie 'Ocean's Eleven'. Philips supplies the film's technical requirements with state-of-the-art multimedia monitors, home theater systems, security technologies and other products and services. Produced by Jerry Weintraub and directed by Steven Soderbergh, the film stars George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Andy Garcia, Don Cheadle, Bernie Mac and Julia Roberts. It will be released in the United States and Europe this month. Shown are Royal Philips Electronics president and CEO Gerard Kleisterlee (left) and chief marketing officer Andrea Ragnetti (right) presenting film producer Weintraub with the first Philips Key019, a wearable digital camcorder that can shoot 25 minutes of Mpeg4 video or snap up to 200 (2.0 Mpixel) pictures, during a shooting break.

ABS-CBN'S 'LIPAD TAYO, KAPAMILYA'

ABS-CBN recently hosted a grand promo expo at the PICC to celebrate the fruitful working relationship the media network has enjoyed with its advertisers over the years. Aptly titled 'Lipad Tayo, Kapamilya', this collaboration of all ABS-CBN divisions and subsidiaries symbolized the mutual growth ABS-CBN and its partners have gained from years of partnership, directed towards the betterment of Filipino businesses and entertainment. ABS-CBN stayed central to its theme as the Forum in PICC was transformed into the ABS-CBN International Airport. Each invitee was welcomed by the ABS-CBN airport crew, played to the part by the network's executives and employees as they donned flight attendants, pilots, cabin crew and porter's uniforms for the gala event. Each ABS-CBN subsidiary and division constructed theme booths that represented an emblematic section of any standard international airport. This event was ABS-CBN's way of showing its gratitude to the advertisers for its unwavering support. With its 64.5-percent nationwide viewing preference, as well as its stellar ratings in areas like Cebu and Davao, ABS-CBN assures advertisers that it is still the best network for advertising enterprises. Shown are Rick Reyes of Club Media and vice president for sales Orly Galang.

Clips

NVC alumni reunion

THE FAMOUS Kalibo Ati-atihan, which will be celebrated this January, caps the activities of the grand reunion of the alumni of the Northwestern Visayan Colleges, a leading educational institution in Panay. NVC alumni now practicing their professions in various parts of the country and abroad are expected to arrive here in Kalibo on the second week of January, just before the Kalibo Ati-atihan, considered to be the most unique of all festivals in the country. Alumni residing in Manila and other areas of the country and abroad can call Johnny Dayang at 892-9278, 894-4687, 0920-9094379 or e-mail papi@gawab.com. For more information about the NVC Alumni Foundation and grand reunion, call Elma M. Jera, NVC alumni affairs coordinator, at (036)262-3937 or e-mail NVCalumni@yahoo.com.

Columbary 75% complete

THE COLUMBARY is now 75-percent completed. Targeted to be complete by end 2005, it will become Quezon City's first fully functional columbary and chapel development. Owned and maintained by the Agustinian fathers, The Columbary is a modern-day depository for the cremated remains of the departed. It is located inside the San Agustin Seminary Compound along Visayas Avenue. For inquiries, call 425-1508/09, 426-6965, or e-mail rdc@thecolumbary.com.ph.

UST-CRS celebrates pearl anniversary

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas' College of Rehabilitation Sciences (UST-CRS), erstwhile Institute of Physical Therapy celebrates its 30th founding anniversary from Dec. 14 to 18 with the theme "Wheeling Around and Beyond". CRS dean Consuelo Gonzalez-Suarez MD said the CRS has grown in leaps and bounds over the years, starting as a baccalaureate program in the College of Science and Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. Today, it is one of the most important colleges of the university, producing globally competitive health professionals over the years. Various activities and events have been lined up for the five-day celebration: Dec. 14-Thanksgiving Mass, parade, opening of exhibits, exposure trip; Dec. 15-Student forum, phyth and tempo (fitness and dance competition); Dec. 16-Misa de Gallo, "Amazing Race" (sports tourney), KinetiQ (quiz show); Dec. 17-Sports for the Disabled, Mr. & Miss Rehabilitation Sciences pageant night; Dec. 18-Grand Ball and Alumni Night. For more inquiries, call professors Jocelyn Agcaoili and Tiffany Mallillin at 740-9713 or 731-3101 loc. 280.

More PEP on pages H8 and B2-6

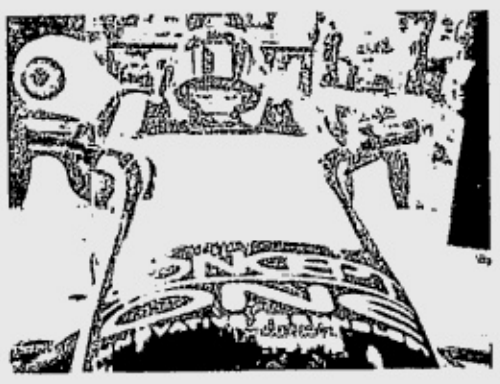
GILBEY'S 'SEARCH AND SPIN' GRAND PRIZE WINNER

James Dizon, a 32-year-old businessman from Pasig, rides the brand-new BMW Mini-Cooper that he won in the Gilbey's 'Search and Spin' promo. With him are, from left, British Ambassador Paul Dimond, Yogi Ringler, marketing director of International Wines and Spirits Inc (Iwsi), distributor of Gilbey's Gin, and Carlos Palanca IV, member of the board of the Palanca Group. The promo, which ran from March until May, also gave away cash prizes and thousands of Gilbey's Gin and Island Lime bottles to lucky participants.

ProductFILES

Proudly Filipino

WHEEL Gallery, exclusive distributor of Concept One alloy wheels, is a proud partner of racing ace Tyson Sy, in his campaign in the AF3 championship and our quest of having a Filipino driver in the prestigious Formula One series. "We are closely following the development of Tyson's career in racing. Like Tyson, Wheel Gallery is an aggressive upstart in the business. We always give our 100 percent in terms of product quality, excellence in craftsmanship and performance," says Sammy Liuson, president of Wheel Gallery.



Tyson wrapped up the 2003 Philippine National Formula 3 Series by clinching a three-title win. This 17-year-old racer won the Promotions Class, Promotions Driver of the Year and the Philippine National Formula 3 Championship. Tyson also finished a strong 6th place, after starting from 31st place, in the recently concluded GT Tires Formula Renault Championship in Macau. Tyson is currently preparing for his stint next year in the international arena. "We are proud of his accomplishments and Concept One is behind him all the way," adds Liuson.

The proud partners of Tyson Sy for F1 glory are: Concept One, A-Toy paint and bodykits, H&R Springs, Petron Ultron, San Miguel Beer, Bosch Automotive, Demvel's Motorsports, and Tiger Steel.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2004

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Build anything; it has everything!

WITH your Christmas bonus just around the corner, you can finally get that long-delayed home improvement project started. If you're worried about the hustle and bustle that goes with the season, you can relax now. Wilcon-the home of quality building materials-has undergone its own renovation to make life for you so much easier.

Being in the business for 27 years now, Wilcon has come to be known as the place for good quality products. But it also knows and keeps up with the needs and trends of the times. In keeping with its goal to excel and be ahead of the rest, it has updated its logos. And, with the improvements that have taken place, it has also transformed the way we shop for building materials.

Known for its wide selection of ceramic tiles, Wilcon has since expanded its product range to include not only finishing materials, but DIY essentials for the hobbyist or the serious builder. Now, Wilcon is bigger and better so you can have total customer satisfaction.

Find everything you need under one roof: plumbing-includes pipes, bathroom taps, fittings, and accessories, among others; electrical-from chandeliers and lamps to cables and outlets; houseware-with various furniture, décor, wallpapers, and carpets to suit your style; automotive-choose from a range of tools and car accessories; outdoor living-everything you need for your garden, including plants and fountains; tools--choose from well-known and reliable brands or the house brand;

WBS paints-for concrete, wood, and metal, there's a rainbow of colors and textures available, as well as paint-mixing facilities in the Alabang and Balintawak depots; tiles-ceramic or porcelain, floor or wall, local or imported; hardware-nails, wood planks, galvanized sheets, knobs, locks and other materials are available; sanitary wares-choose from many toilet, sink, bathtub, shower enclosure, spa and sauna system designs ranging from the affordable to the elegant, with brands such as Karat, Kasch and Kohler; doors and moldings--fine-crafted in wood and PVC.

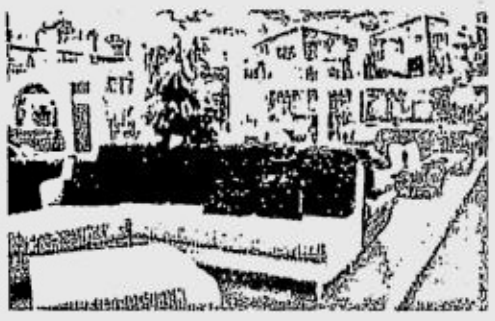
You have a myriad of options, including the latest designs and innovations in building materials. Wilcon carries many high-quality brands from Europe, United States, Asia, and the Philippines. There's something to suit your style and budget.

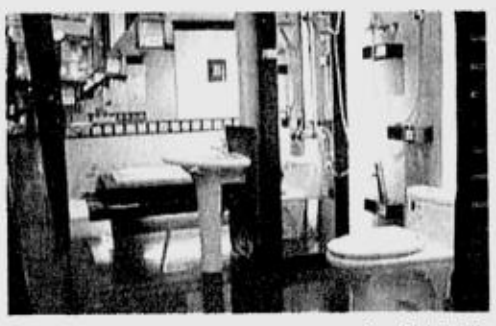
Bring the entire family. Each Wilcon Builders' Depot has a Kiddie Play Corner where your children can play while you shop. After going through the variety of items to choose from, relax and unwind at the company coffee shop also located in the Depot.

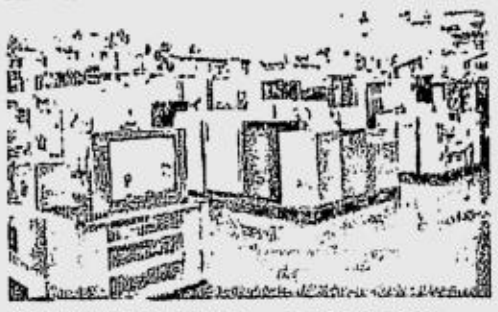
And don't worry about not being able to fit everything in your car or of high delivery charges. If you live within Metro Manila, Wilcon can deliver your purchases right at your doorstep for free.

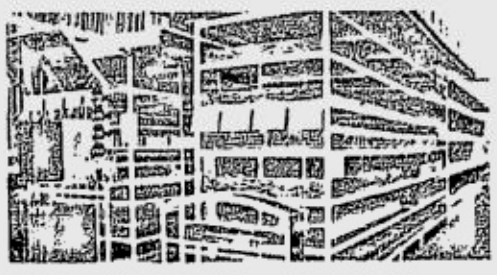
And you can even get your money back. For a minimum purchase of P1,000 at any Wilcon outlet, you can join the Money Back Raffle and get the chance to win up to P100,000 refund every week! Raffle draws are held every Sunday until Jan 2, 2005.

So, if you're building or renovating, go to any of Wilcon's 13 branches and enjoy the convenience of a one-stop construction shop. You can also log on to http://wilcon.com.ph or e-mail wilcon@wilcon.ph.









RICHWELL TOY FAIR OPENING CEREMONY

Richwell Trading Corp (RTC) president Albert Yao (2nd from left), RTC chief operating officer Myrna Yao (3rd from right) and Department of Trade and Industry assistant secretary Felicitas Reyes (3rd from left) lead the opening ceremony of the Richwell Annual Toy Fair together with RTC vice president for finance and merchandising Liza Yao (right), V-Tech Electronics Asia Pacific marketing manager Thomas Lam (2nd from right) and Pigeon Corp overseas department head Isao Aoki at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. The Richwell Toy Fair is the biggest and most anticipated toy event in the country. It showcased the latest and upcoming toys, apparels, shoes and baby products to be released this Holiday season. The products on exhibit include popular brands such as Barbie, Hot Wheels, Fisher Price, My Scene, Mega Bloks, Garfield, Chicco and Pigeon, among others. The Richwell Annual Toy Fair started in 1982 and is the first to introduce the character shop concept in the local toy market. It continues to set the standard and pioneers innovative ideas that will boost the Philippine toy industry. Today, Richwell is the largest toy distributor in the country and the top player in the children shoe and baby product business.

CoQ10, the body's defense against heart disease

THE ADVENT of modern-day technology resulted in a sedentary lifestyle. The fastfood chains we love to patronize whipped up unhealthy foods. We associate the word "unwind" with cigarette smoking and alcohol intake. Unhealthy lifestyles-physical inactivity, a sinful diet, excessive smoking and drinking-regardless of age are the leading causes of heart diseases.

For many years, heart ailments remain as the number one killer disease of mankind. In 1998, heart disease had the highest mortality rate (a total of 55,830) among the killer diseases in the Philippines. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that each year, 17 million succumbed to diseases of the cardiovascular system, particularly heart attack and stroke. WHO divulged that post-menopausal women have a greater risk of suffering from heart disease than men.

According to medical experts, maintaining an active and robust lifestyle is the best ounce of prevention against this dreaded disease. With the advent of modern medicine, now there are natural substances that keep the heart healthy such as Ubiquinone, also known as CO-Enzyme Q10 or COQ10. CoQ10 is a natural substance found in the mitochondria, which aids in the manufacture of adenosine triphospate (ATP), an essential source of energy. Scientists discovered that if the COQ10 level drops by more than 25 percent, several diseases can be triggered and a fall by as much as 75 percent can cause death.

According to Dr. Karl Folkers (the father of COQ10), the insufficiency of COQ10 can significantly increase the risk of CVD. Based on the study of Langsjoen et al, published in the journal Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications, after the heart disease patients were treated by COQ10, some of them were not required to take any other conventional medicines and had no lifestyle limitations.

Other studies also proved that CoQ10 efficiently aids in heart and liver function. The energy-producing capabilities of ubiquinone enhance muscle performance and maintains effective metabolism at the same time. Health professionals claimed that aside from the clinical value of COQ10 against heart ailments, it also speeds up the metabolism, enhances the immune system, prevents gum disease, provides anti-oxidant activity, ignites energy levels and retards the aging process.

Trianon COQ10, which comes in 10 and 30 mg capsules is, a brand name for CoQ10. For best results, it is recommended to be taken thrice a day. It is manufactured by Health Company International Inc, a US-based drug company, and is distributed in the Philippines by Trianon International Inc. It is available in all Mercury and Watson drugstores.

BEDANS GEAR-UP FOR 2005 HOMECOMING

Final preparations are being made to ensure that the San Beda College Alumni Homecoming will be a truly grand and memorable one. With its rallying theme "Ang Pula. Ang Puti. Sa Mendiola Ang Uwi", the homecoming event will be held on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2005 at the SBC Quadrangle. An Alumni Mass will start the celebrations at 4 p.m. Shown are representatives of the 2005 Jubilee classes (HS '55, HS '60, HS '65, HS '70, HS '75, HS '80 and HS '85) together with reps from the 2006 Jubilee classes (HS '56, HS '61, HS '66, HS '71, HS '76 and HS '81) and former rector and alumni spiritual director Fr. Benigno Benabarre OSB posing in front of the SBC Main Gate after a recent Homecoming Video shoot. All SBC alumni batches from the grade school, high school, college of arts and sciences and college of law are wholeheartedly invited to attend. For more information on this event, and to find out more about the whereabouts of your classmates, call Wilma Abellanosa at the SBC Alumni Association office at 735-5995 or 735-6011 local 2740. Bedans, the Clarion calls!

SNIFFING THEIR WAY TO BUSINESS

The recently concluded Aromatherapy and Perfume-making Seminar conducted by Chemworld Fragrance Institute was again a success with another batch of promising entrepreneurs now ready to sniff into the perfumery business. The seminar is held every Saturdays at the Chemworld office located at the 5th floor of the Oppen Building, 349 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati. Shown is Alexis Pineda, general manager of Chemworld, with seminar participants during an actual demonstration.

ProductFILES

TJ Clark now available

MINERAL Enhancement International Inc introduces to the country the TJ Clark Colloidal Mineral Formula, an ideal dietary supplement for health buffs, physical fitness aficionados, and anyone who just wants to enjoy healthy, vibrant living. TJ Clark Colloidal Formula contains the 72 minerals needed by the human body to function properly. These minerals, harvested from age-old rain forest in Utah, guarantee 98 to 100-percent absorption.

TJ Clark Liquids are manufactured by TJ Clark & Co, one of the most phenomenal family-owned businesses in American history that created the colloidal mineral industry. TJ Clark products are sold in over 50 countries worldwide and are available in over 5,000 health food stores and pharmacies in Australia, New Zealand and now the Philippines. TJ Clark Colloidal Mineral Formula is initially available at the MEII office located at the 3rd floor of Don Pablo Building, 114 Amorsolo Street, Legazpi Village, Makati. For inquiries and order placements, call 812-9664, 410-1317, fax 759-6700 or e-mail mei@spinweb.ph.

'Dare to Compare' mall tour

GET TO experience firsthand the innovation that is Pixel Plus 2 as Philips, Europe's number one consumer electronics company, embarks on a Pixel Plus 2 "Dare to Compare" mall tour. Check out the superior features of Pixel Plus 2 at the Metro Link Area of the Edsa Shangri-La Mall from Dec. 17 to 19 and at the lower level of the Makati Mall Cupola, Glorietta, from Jan. 26 to 30. The Pixel Plus 2 "Dare to Compare" mall tour gives consumers a unique opportunity to clearly see and experience for themselves the overwhelming superiority of Pixel Plus 2 technology vis-á-vis those being offered by the other top brands. Pixel Plus 2 delivers intense picture quality, true natural detail and amazing sharpness. The Philips Pixel Plus 2 is able to calculate at a maximum picture resolution of 1,250 lines and 2,048 pixels per line. It also features Ambilight, providing a well-balanced amount of light to reduce glare.

More PEP on pages H7 and B2-6

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ENTERTAINMENT Metro

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How many Christmas movies have you seen?

HOW MANY Christmas movies/animated features have you seen? Here's a list you can check against.

Two of these holiday favorites are rated among the US' top-grossing movies of all time: "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (2000) is in the 25th slot, having grossed $260,031,035, and "Elf" (2003), comes in at number 80, with $173,305,906.

- "A Charlie Brown Christmas," 1965
- "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving," 1973
- "A Christmas Carol," 1997
- "A Christmas Story," 1983
- "Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights," 2002
- "Bad Santa," 2003
- "Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas," 1997
- "Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas (Special Edition)," 1997
- "Christmas Carol: The Movie," 2001
- "Christmas with the Simpsons," 1989-2001
- "Die Hard," 1988
- "Die Hard 2: Die Harder," 1990
- "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas," 2000
- "Edward Scissorhands," 1990
- "Gremlins," 1984
- "Elf," 2003
- "Frosty The Snowman: Christmas Classics Collection," 1969
- "Here Comes Peter Cottontail," 1971
- "Holiday Inn," 1942
- "Home Alone," 1990
- "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," 1966
- "It's A Very Merry Muppet Christmas Movie," 2002
- "It's a Wonderful Life," 1946
- "It's Christmas Time Again, Charlie Brown," 1992
- "Jingle All The Way," 1996
- "Mickey's Magical Christmas," 2001
- "Mickey's Once Upon A Christmas: Gold Collection," 1999
- "Mickey's Twice Upon A Christmas," 2004
- "Miracle On Third Street," 2001
- "Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol," 1962
- "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation," 1989
- "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 2: Cousin Eddie's Island Adventure," 2003
- "Reindeer Games," 2000
- "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer: Christmas Classics Collection," 1964
- "Santa Claus: The Movie," 1985
- "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town: Christmas Classics Collection," 1970
- "South Park: Christmas in South Park," 1998-1999
- "South Park: Winter Wonderland," 1990-2000
- "The Santa Clause," 1994
- "The Santa Clause 2: The Mrs. Clause," 2002
- "The Simpsons Christmas 2," 2000-2003
- "The Year Without a Santa Claus," 1974
- "VeggieTales: The Star of Christmas," 2002
- "White Christmas," 1954
- "Winnie the Pooh: Seasons of Giving," 1999
- "Winnie the Pooh: A Very Merry Pooh Year," 2002

TV GUIDE

Monday, December 13, 2004

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	It Might Be You	Lovers In Paris	Krystala	Hiram	Star Circle Natl Teen Quest	OK Final Whatever		Insider	The Correspondents
NBN	Value Vision				Teledyaryo	Value Vision	Next Stop			Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Musconi Cup 2003				Dial M	
ABC 5	Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	Art Is-Kool	Anime Ring Kaisho				Sentro	Friends	The Apprentice		Fear Factor		Big News	Popsi		Extreme Island	Billboard On-Air		
GMA 7	Leya (2:45 PM)	Joyride (3:15 PM)	Snow Angel (3:45 PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45 PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:15 PM) Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Island Life		Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Wrestling		NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Sex & the City	Wed TV	Hearthline
IBC 13		V League				IBC Express Balita		Home Shopping Network		Retro TV		Japan Video Topic		Retro TV	Global Family Series		IBC News Tonite	Unawn Natin	
Solar		Wow		Slamball		Rastol	Zoila Project	Mucha Luchal	Spiderman	Deep Space Nine		Witchblade		Twilight Zone		Dangerous Touch			
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	OPM MYX Countdown		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		The O.C.		Saturday Night Live		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	JKX	Meet My Folks		Queer Eye For A Straight Guy		Dateline		Nip/ Tuck	
Cinema One		Oops Teka Lang Diskarte Ko Toi				Ina ka Ng Anak Mo				Matalino Man Ang Matsing				Andrea Paano Ba Ang Maging Isang Ina				Xerox	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	Batman Animated Series	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Video	Jake 2.0		Channed		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		The Right Stuff II	Rated X	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Boomtown		Fear Factor		The Shield		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	
Star World	When Hidden Cameras Attack	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	That 70s Show	Everybody Loves Raymond	Grounded For Life	Becker	Breaking The Magician's Code		Friends	That 70s Show
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Killer Instinct	Totally Wild	Be The Creature		Planet Wild	Wildlife Detectives	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Natl Geographic Specials		Killer Instincts/ Totally Wild	Totally Wild	Be The Creature	
Solar Sports		Get A Grip		World C'ship Kickboxing		Fight Sports Greatest Classics				Sagupaan		NBA Jam	NBA TV Daily	NBA Utah vs. Portland (replay)					NBA Action
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	El True Hollywood Story		Behind The Velvet Ropes	Area		Breathing Room	Genuine Article	Planet Parent	30 Minute Meals
HBO	Frances (2:45 PM)					Bike Squad (5:15 PM)			Bad Boys II (6:40 PM)					Star Trek Generations				Scooped	
Star Movies			Sonny (3:45 PM)				The Sixth Man				Casper (7:20 PM)			Saving Jessica Lynch			40 Days And 40 Nights		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Richie Rich	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomerangtion	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN		Pool/Snooker World Pool League '04 Poland		NFL Football - Philadelphia vs. Redskins						Eng. Premier League Highlights 04/05		Sportscenter Taiwan	Pool/Snooker World Pool Master '04 Holland				Pool/Snooker World Pool League '04 Holland		Sportscenter Taiwan
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Maguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Un-talkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	The Sum Of All Fears				Try To Remember			Edge Of Madness			When Trumpets Fade			Strictly Ballroom			Panic Room (10:40 PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Midsomer Murders: Ring Out Your Dead				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		The District		We Were The Mulvaneys			Judging Amy (10:35 PM)		Mysterious Ways (11:25 PM)
Discovery Channel		Monster Garage		Mythbusters		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Unsolved History				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Civilizations	
MTV Philippines		MTV Lokal		Non-Stop Hits		MTV Live		MTV Get Spoted	MTV Loveline	Non-Stop Hits		MTV Brand New	MTV Fashionista	TRL		Cribs	Spring Break	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus	Inside the PGA	Get A Grip	Chacker Auto Parts Highlight Program		Porsche md 9&10	Superbowl6 Cowboys vs Dolphins		Target World Chall. Final rd (replay)						NFL Delayed Telecast					
EWTN	St. Matthew	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Benediction And Devotion	Story Keepers	Image Of God	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Light Of The East II	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	Threshold Of Hope Encore		Sunday Night Live With Fr. Groschel		Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15 PM)	G.K. Chesterton	Catholic Compass	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

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US looks into Internet music, film exchange

WASHINGTON—The US Supreme Court on Friday agreed to consider whether Internet file-trading networks should be held responsible when their users copy music, movies and other protected works without permission.

Online networks like Grokster and Morpheus allow millions of computer users to copy music and movies for free from each others' hard drives. Recording labels and movie studios say that cuts into their sales.

But the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in August that peer-to-peer networks cannot be held liable for copyright infringement because, like a videocassette recorder, they can be used for legitimate purposes as well.

Even as record labels challenge the appeals court's decision, they are tentatively embracing peer-to-peer networks as a way to cut distribution costs and reach out to listeners.

By the time the Supreme Court hears the case, all four major labels—Vivendi Universal, EMI Group Plc , Sony BMG Music Entertainment and privately held Warner Music—could be distributing their songs over a new generation of peer-to-peer networks like Snocap and Mashboxx that promise to collect payment for songs. The court is expected to issue a decision by June. *Reuters*

Timeless selection by Billboard mag

BILLBOARD, bible of the music industry in the United States, lent its name four years ago to a CD titled "Billboard's Greatest Xmas Hits: 1935-1954," which continues to sell copies. Selected for recording by various artists were:

1) White Christmas—Bing Crosby; 2) Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!—Vaughn Monroe; 3) Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer—Gene Autry; 4) Christmas Song—Nat "King" Cole; 5) All I Want for Christmas (Is My Two Front Teeth)—Spike Jones; 6) I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus—Jim Boyd; 7) Christmas Island—The Andrews Sisters and Guy Lombardo; 8) Silent Night—Bing Crosby; 9) Here Comes Santa Claus—Gene Autry; 10) Santa Baby—Eartha Kitt

Playing time is under 30 minutes, but the album is, as an online review desribes it, "is Christmas to the fullest." It is great to listen to, the review says, no matter what one is doing—typing at the computer, wrapping presents, "even falling asleep is that much brighter when this CD is playing."

DERO Pedero (center) with Cody Moreno, Miss Sweden Sara Lundemo, Chris Petersson, Miss Canada Tanya Munizaga and Brad Turvey.

Program your mind for success

COMPOSER and book author Dero Pedero presents three exclusive seminars designed to jump start 2005: "Make Your Impossible Dreams Come True!," "Money, Money! Secret Principles of Money & Prosperity," and "You Can Be More Beautiful & Photogenic!" The empowering and highly entertaining three-hour sessions will be held at Club Filipino in Greenhills Dec. 28-30.

For information and reservations, e-mail DeroSeminars@yahoo.com or call/text 0920-4053233. Tickets are available at the ProShop at the Club Filipino basement. Inquire about the early bird and student discounts and private or corporate sessions.

Film on '84 riots in India

BOMBAY—US-based Shonali Bose is set to release a film next month depicting anti-Sikh riots that hit India following the assassination of then prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1984, after accepting cuts demanded by Indian censors.

Bose told AFP that "Amu," based on her novel of the same title has been shot in English and cleared for release in India by the Central Board of Film Certification.

"Amu" tells the story of an orphan named Kaju, adopted and brought up in L.A. by American parents, who returns to India to discover her roots and finds that her real parents were killed during the anti-Sikh riots.

The riots were triggered after Gandhi was shot dead by her Sikh bodyguards in revenge for her ordering the storming of the Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, by army forces seeking to evict separatists using it as a sanctuary.

Kaju's voyage of self-discovery takes her from the mustard fields of rural India to the killing fields of New Delhi during the 1984 riots and reveals the mystery of her past in a searing climax. More than 2,000 Sikhs were killed in the riots.

Actress Konkona Sen Sharma plays the role of Kaju.

She won a national award in 2003 for best actress in a critically acclaimed film "Mr. and Mrs. Iyer" by director Aparna Sen about a Hindu woman who protects a Muslim passenger facing assault on a bus by claiming him as her husband. *AFP*

SM CINEMA movietime

what to watch

THE PODIUM CINEMA
For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
1 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
2 BIRTH

2046 — MTRCB RATING: R13
SM Southmall Cinema 10 | SM Megamall Cinema 7 | SM North Edsa Cinema 8 | SM Manila Cinema 6

ALEXANDER — MTRCB RATING: R13
SM Manila Cinema 4 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 3 | SM Fairview Cinema 7 | SM Megamall Cinema 6 | SM North Edsa Cinema 1 | SM Southmall Cinema 8 | SM Tutuban Cinema 4

BIRTH — SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
SM Southmall Cinema 3 | SM North Edsa Cinema 5 | SM Megamall Cinema 5 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 9 | SM Manila Cinema 7

BRIDGET JONES 2 — MTRCB Rating: PG 13
SM Manila Cinema 11 | SM Megamall Cinema 12 | SM Fairview Cinema 2 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 4 | SM Southmall Cinema 1

NED KELLY — SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
SM Fairview Cinema 4 | SM Tutuban Cinema 2 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 8 | SM Manila Cinema 5 | SM North Edsa Cinema 5 | SM Southmall Cinema 4 | SM Megamall Cinema 2

ONE MISSED CALL — MTRCB RATING: R 13
SM Manila Cinema 8 | SM Megamall Cinema 9 | SM Bicutan Cinema 3 | SM Sucat Cinema 3 | SM North Edsa Cinema 4 | SM Sta Mesa Cinema 2

PA-SIYAM — SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
SM Bicutan Cinema 2 | SM North Edsa Cinema 3 | SM Manila Cinema 9 | SM Sta Mesa Cinema 1 | SM Megamall Cinema 8 | SM Southmall Cinema 7 | SM Sucat Cinema 2 | SM Fairview Cinema 5 | SM Tutuban Cinema 3

BCUZ OF U — SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
SM Manila Cinema 12 | SM Megamall Cinema 11 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 10 | SM Fairview Cinema 8 | SM Southmall Cinema 9

GEORGE OF THE DRAGON — SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
SM Manila Cinema 2 | SM North Edsa Cinema 7 | SM Megamall Cinema 3 | SM Tutuban Cinema 1

THE POLAR EXPRESS — MTRCB Rating: G
SM Megamall Cinema 1 | SM Southmall Cinema 5 | SM Fairview Cinema 8 | SM Sta Mesa Cinema 7 | SM Manila Cinema 3

NATIONAL TREASURE — MTRCB RATING: G
SM Manila Cinema 1 | SM North Edsa Cinema 7 | SM Southmall Cinema 2 | SM Sucat Cinema 4 | SM Fairview Cinema 6 | SM Megamall Cinema 3 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 5 | SM Bicutan Cinema 4

SANTA SANTITA — MTRCB RATING: PG13
SM Fairview Cinema 10

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CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS GP
2 (DOLBY) BRIDGET JONES PG13
3 (DOLBY) GEORGE AND THE DRAGON GP
4 (DOLBY) 2046 R13

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2 (SDDS) CHRISTMAS WITH A KRANKS
3 (DTS) POLAR EXPRESS
4 GOLD (DTS) 2046
5 GOLD (DOLBY) BIRTH
6 GOLD (SDDS) NATIONAL TREASURE
7 GOLD (DOLBY) ALEXANDER
8 (DTS) BCUZ OF U
9 (DTS) SEED OF CHUCKY
10 (DTS) BRIDGET JONES

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
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1 (DOLBY) BIRTH
2 (DOLBY) BRIDGET JONES DIARY 2
3 (DOLBY) NATIONAL TREASURE
4 (DOLBY) 2046

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4 (SDDS) NATIONAL TREASURE
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6 (Dolby) PA SIYAM
7 (Dolby) BCUZ OF U

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3 RESERVE
4 (SDDS) RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 (DOLBY) RESERVE
7 (DTS) RESERVE
8 RESERVE
9 RESERVE

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2 RESERVED
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4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) ALEXANDER
5 SALAT SA LIGAYA

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3 PA-SIYAM
4 BCUZ OF U
5 (DOLBY) ALEXANDER
6 NATIONA TREASURE

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3 SKY CAPTAIN
4 (DTS) SALAT

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'Secretary of Soul' has prostate cancer

NEW YORK—Singer James Brown, the music pioneer known as The Godfather of Soul, has prostate cancer and will have surgery next week, his publicist said on Friday.

The 71-year-old Brown, who just finished a two-week Canadian tour, will have surgery at an undisclosed hospital in Georgia on Dec. 15, said publicist Simone Smalls.

Brown then plans to begin promoting his memoir, "I Feel Good: A Memoir of a Life of Soul," to be published in January.

Brown has had 119 singles make the charts and made more than 50 albums since his debut record, "Please, Please, Please," was released in 1956.

Fans wanting to direct well-wishes to Brown can address him at JB@intrigue-music.com, Smalls said.

A member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Grammys, Brown was recognized at the Kennedy Center Honors last year where presenter Secretary of State Colin Powell called him the "Secretary of Soul" and "Foreign Minister of Funk." *Reuters*

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1,2,3 & 4	POLAR EXPRESS-XMAS W/ KRANKS/BRIDGET JONES/GEORGE & D DRAGON/2046
PREMIERE THEATRE	NATIONAL TREASURE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HELL WOLFI
CINEMA-2	SALAT
CINEMA-3	SEED OF CHUCKY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	POLAR EXPRESS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-6	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-7	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-8	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ALEXANDER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	ONE MISSED CALL
CINEMA-12	BIRTH
CINEMA-14	PASIYAM
CINEMA-15	BCUZ OF U
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	BOURNE SUPREMACY
CINEMA-1	FENG SHUI
CINEMA-2	SECRET WINDOW
CINEMA-4	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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For inquiries, call:
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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	BIRTH 10:40, 1:05, 3:35, 6:05 8:35, 11:05 PG-13
2	BRIDGET JONES DIARY 2 10:30, 12:50, 3:20, 5:50, 8:20, 10:50 PG-13
3	NATIONAL TREASURE 11:10, 1:55, 4:40 7:25, 10:30 GP
4	2046 12:00, 2:40, 5:20 8:00, 10:40 R-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ALEXANDER R13 12:30,3:40,6:50,10:00	NATIONAL TREASURE GP 12:10,2:40,5:10,7:40,10:10	BRIDGET JONES PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:15
THE INCREDIBLES GP 12:10,2:40,5:10 ONE MISSED CALL R13 7:40,10:00	POLAR EXPRESS GP 11:45,1:55,4:05 2046 R13 7:20,9:50	NED KELLY PG13 12:40,3:05,5:30,7:55,10:20

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3 Saw	1 Birth	1 The Incredibles
4 Alexander	2 Salat sa Ligaya	2 Ginger Snaps 2
5 Salat sa Ligaya	3 Pa-Siyam	
	4 Bcuz of U	
	5 Alexander	
	6 National Treasure	

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CINEMA 1: 2046 10:25, 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:35 R13

CINEMA 2: BIRTH 11:35, 1:55, 4:15, 6:35, 8:55 P13

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1. POLAR EXPRESS (GP) FS 10 45AM, 3 15PM, LMF 7 45PM
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (GP) FS 1 00PM, 5 30PM, LMF 10 00PM
2. BRIDGET JONES (EDGE OF REASON) FS 11 45AM, 2 15PM, 4 45PM, 7:15PM, LMF 9.45PM (PG-13)
3. GEORGE & THE DRAGON FS 11 35AM, 2 00PM, 4 25PM, 6 50PM LMF 9.15PM (GP)
4. 2046 FS 10 50AM, 1 30PM, 4 10PM, 6 50PM, LMF 9 30PM (R-13)

PREMIERE THEATRE: NATIONAL TREASURE (GP) FS 11:20AM,2PM,4:40PM,7:20PM,LMF 10:00PM

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 ALEXANDER • THX 11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00
2 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:30 12:40 2:50 / 2046 4:50 7:25 10:00
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
4 NED KELLY 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
5 BIRTH 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
6 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
7 TWO BROTHERS 12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40
8 PA-SIYAM 12:40 3:00 5;:20 7:40 10:00
9 THE INCREDIBLES 10:20 12:45 3:10 / ONE MISSED CALL 5:20 7:40 10:00
10 BRIDGET JONES 2 12:10 2:40 5:10 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 9:50
2 THE INCREDIBLES 10:40 1:10 3:40 / ONE MISSED CALL 6:10 8:15 10:00
3 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:35 12:00 3:05 / 2046 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 PA-SIYAM 10.35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
5 RESERVE
6 NED KELLY 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:15 10:00
7 BIRTH 10:15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:25 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 • 682-8280

1 BCUZ OF U 10:20 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10
2 ALEXANDER 10:55 2:20 5:45 9:10
3 BRIDGET JONES 2 10:55 1:25 3:55 6:25 9:00
4 SEED OF CHUCKY 10.50 12.50 2.50 4.50 6:50 9:00
5 BIRTH 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
6 NATIONAL TREASURE 10.55 1:50 4.45 7:40 10:30
7 ONE MISSED CALL 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40 10:30
8 PA-SIYAM 11:50 2:30 5.10 7:50 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 ALEXANDER 10:40 1:50 5:00 8:15
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
3 HELLWOLF 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
4 SYLVIA 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
5 BCUZ OF U 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
6 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:45 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:20
7 SEED OF CHUCKY 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
8 THE INCREDIBLES 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30

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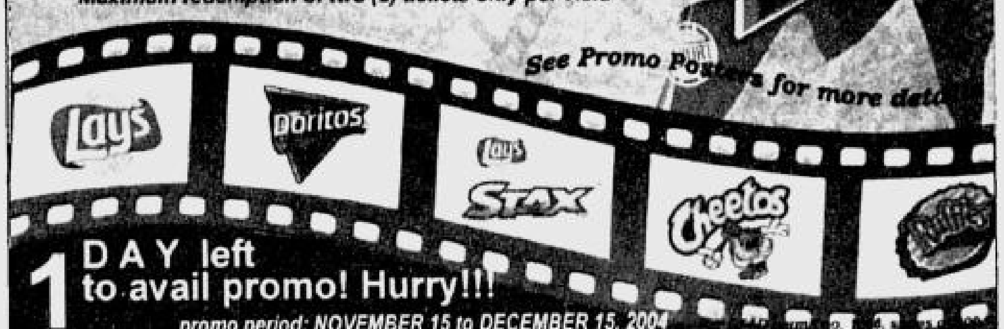

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1 ALEXANDER 10:40 2:00 5:20 8:50
2 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON 10:45 1:10 3.35 6:00 8:25
3 NATIONAL TREASURE 12:05 2:55 5:45 8:45
4 NED KELLY 11:30 1:50 4:10 6:30 8:50

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985 / 2575

1 SAW 11:45 1:45 4:05 6:15 8:30
2 SEED OF CHUCKY 11.45 1:45 4:05 6:15 8:30
3 BCUZ OF U 11:10 1:30 3.50 6:10 8:30
4 NAKAW NA SANDALI 11:45 1:45 4:05 6.15 8.30

CAINTA 240-4661

1 ALEXANDER 12:00 2:55 5:50 8:45
2 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:35 1:20 4.45 8.45
3 PA-SIYAM 10:10 12:50 3:30 6:10 8:50
4 SEED OF CHUCKY 11.00 1:20 3:45 6:00 8:20

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7 BCUZ OF U

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Dec. 26 DISNEY ON ICE 2pm/6pm
Dec. 27 DISNEY ON ICE 2pm/6pm
Dec. 28 DISNEY ON ICE 6pm
Dec. 29 DISNEY ON ICE 2pm/6pm

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Steamy, steamy night

GENEVA Cruz: A knockout

PDI DISCO night

By Marinel R. Cruz

SOME SEXY acts took off their tops.

They gyrated to disco music, but so did INQUIRER employees who celebrated the company's 19th anniversary on Friday night.

Members of the Viva Hot Babes teased and sent the crowd, especially the male populace, into a tizzy. Hot Babe Miles Hernandez created the biggest stir when, onstage, she peeled the shirt off INQ7.net president and CEO Paolo Prieto.

The spectators swore they saw Paolo's mother, INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto, catch her breath and close her eyes when Miles reached for Paolo's crotch.

SHOW STOPPER

Viva Hot Men did a steamy song-and-dance number, so hot they could not keep their own shirts on. Sexy singer Geneva Cruz, who donned a mini-skirt and a lacy black top under a fuchsia jacket, performed some Beyonce songs.

Gen's former Smokey Mountain bandmate, Jeffrey Hidalgo, serenaded the females in the audience with a couple of his personal favorites, while Jenny Miller titillated the men with some R&B ditties.

Young performers Sarah Geronimo, Erik Santos and Christian Bautista were also crowd favorites.

But INQUIRER had its share of stars, too: Jim Guiao Punzalan, Mylene de Jesus, Gina Layague, Darwin Romanillos, Lito Rivera, Normandy dela Paz, Aries Espinosa and the Ketchup Band.

Theme for this year's celebration was rock 'n' roll, and so the special guests were RJ Jacinto and his band, who performed songs by Elvis, Jimi Hendrix, and the Beatles.

Groups like the De La Salle Choral and Mojofly were around to share their kinds of music. Kids @ Work started the program with a rousing dance number.

A production number presented by the Marketing department—composed of Chris Vida, Masoy Cabuhat, Gidget Aranda, Ching dela Cruz, Joseph Fua and Hazel Soriaga—won the judges' nod for the employee's competition portion.

But the Editorial department's team—Emmie Velarde, Abel Ulanday, Mercy Rosales, Roy Sarmiento, Jamie Alarcon and Santi Alcantara—was the best applauded. The group won second prize.

Mabel Cabral, Marife Reyes, Chona Agustin, Ian Resurrecion, Richard Marasigan and Michael Bulanon represented the Finance department.

Performers from the Classifieds department were Mhar de los Reyes, Joel Macawile, Arnold Gatdula, Lala Montesines, Lilie Lazaro, Joy Tabuso, Beng Fernandez and Pat Lechadores.

VIVA Hotmen took off the tanks

JENNY Miller with Marketing's Joseph Fua

CHRISTIAN Bautista

SARAH Geronimo

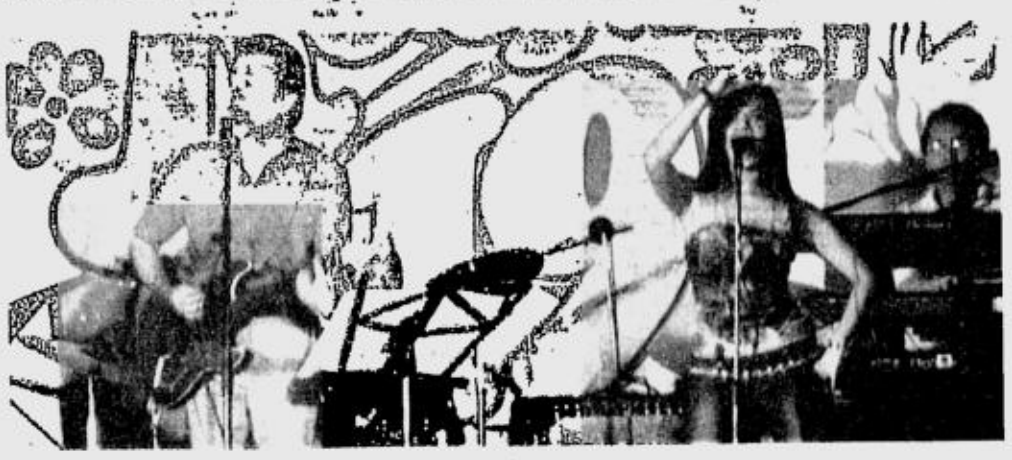
ERIK Santos

JEFFREY Hidalgo with Marketing's Gidget Aranda

PDI'S Ketchup Band

PDI CHAIR Marixi Prieto with emcee Louie Bacani

MILES Fernandez with HR's Shirman Tan



RJ AND his band

THE EDITORIAL department performers

THE WINNERS from Marketing